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Saipan Tribune

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Should Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution be placed on the ballot in 2011?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

135 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Freak Weather

A large, violent tornado ripped through a southern Oklahoma town, killing four people and injuring up to 50.

NATION...Page 15

Cover Girl

The world knows a lot more about Bar Refaeli today than it did yesterday, including where her tiny tan line falls.

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NMC's Fernandez faces barrage of criticism. PAGE 2
Public input sought on proposed tourism visa regs. PAGE 3

NMI, A. SAMOA IN US STIMULUS BILL

Stimulus bill requires GAO study on wage hike impact

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The stimulus bill that hurdled the U.S. Senate yesterday includes an amendment that would require the General Accounting Office to submit a report on the impact of past and future minimum wage increases in the CNMI and American Samoa.

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AGRICULTURE SUMMIT NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

One of the group session leaders, Patrick Calvo, present recommendations during the first day of the Agricultural Summit held yesterday at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort. The newly formed Farmers Support Group is behind this event, which is envisioned to prevent too much reliance on imported food items and to boost the local economy. ***See story on Page 4.***

Senate OKs override of budget veto

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The expected unanimous vote to override the governor's veto of the budget didn't happen at the Senate yesterday but it still managed to garner enough votes to sail through the upper house.

The override action on the government's budget plan for FY 2009 was supported by the majority except for Tinian senators Joseph Mendiola and Henry San Nicolas, who cited the need to wait for the House's action on the veto message and the standing bills related to the budget legislation.

Manglona

Offered by Floor Leader Sen.

See SENATE on Page 4

Fake bills now made on Saipan

Meth dealers said to be behind it

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The problem of counterfeit bills on Saipan is getting serious, with people involved in illegal drugs believed to be behind the circulation of these fake bills on the island, according to the Crime Stoppers Program coordinator.

Police Officer 2 Jason Tarkong underscored the seriousness of the problem, saying their information indicates that these fake dollar bills are now being made locally.

The gravity of the situation has warranted a visit by two U.S. Secret Service special agents,

See FAKE on Page 4

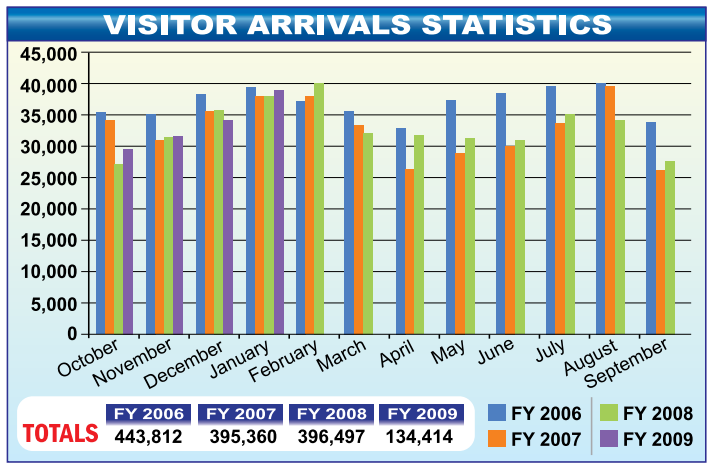
Arrivals up 2.13 pct. in January

More tourists visited the CNMI in January compared to the same period last year and the local visitors authority attributes the modest spike to the charter flights from Russia and Lunar New Year arrivals.

Tourist arrivals to the islands rose 2.13 percent last month compared to January 2008, with total visitor arrivals reaching 38,932 in January 2009 versus 38,119 in January 2008, based on the latest statistics from the Marianas Visitors Authority issued yesterday.

While the worldwide economic downturn paints a bleak forecast for arrivals in 2009, the small gain in January came from two Russian charter flights, increased travel during the Chinese New Year holiday, and an

See ARRIVALS on Page 4



Local

NMC's Fernandez faces barrage of criticism

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Near the end of her two-year presidency at the Northern Marianas College, Dr. Carmen Fernandez's popularity seems to be on shaky ground as a number of faculty and employees have expressed problems adjusting to her management style, with some even questioning her decision-making. This has led to a rumored signature drive to oust her even as the CNMI's lone tertiary institution continues to be on show-cause status by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Given the twin burdens, however, of resolving accreditation deficiencies and a budget that's significantly lower than before, Fernandez said she was forced to make some extremely difficult decisions—decisions that may be at the root of the recent grumblings at the college. She pointed out, though, that the college has many channels and means through which anybody may share their views on matters and decisions affecting NMC.

Not everybody is against her, though. Some staff who spoke with the *Saipan Tribune* expressed their support for Fernandez, saying she is doing the best she can with the resources she has at her disposal. That hasn't stopped others from coming forward to relay their increasing dissatisfaction with Fernandez, saying that her "lack of transparency" and "insufficient respect" toward staff contribute to the declining morale at the college.

An instructional staff said Fernandez's hiring practice has become a magnet of criticism. The staff cited the exit of a number of employees whom they believe were not given "another chance" or proper due process. This list includes ex-NMC employees Howard Cole, Danny Wyatt, Pat Taylor, and Daisy Villagomez-Bier.

The staff said that some questions were also raised on the "capabilities" of some "political hires" at the college as well as the unusual termination spree enacted by Fernandez.

A check with Frank Sobolewski, NMC faculty president and chairman of the college's Social Sciences and Finance departments, confirmed these sentiments.

Fernandez

"Yes, there's a general feeling of fear among them. It is because they believe that when they say things the president doesn't like, there will be some sort of retaliation, perhaps some non-renewal of contracts…which many believe has happened and has been happening," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

He cited as example the termination in November 2007 of Cole, a Tinian instructor, when he disclosed the decision to shut down the academic programs on Rota and Tinian.

"That's one instance—the on-the-spot termination of the Tinian instructor in the middle of the semester with no guarantee that there would be qualified instructors to continue those classes," he said.

Sobolewski believes that, if a survey is conducted today among faculty members, the dissatisfaction level would be high.

He conceded that the college's fast turnover rate of instructors began in previous leaderships but this practice continued through the current management. "It seems like in this decade, NMC is a very popular place to leave voluntarily or otherwise," he said.

He added that the most important cultural value of indigenous people is respect. "And this respect is inadequate here at NMC," he said.

Saipan Tribune heard yesterday about a campaign to oust the NMC president via a signature drive but Sobolewski, who also serves as Faculty Senate president, said he is not aware of it.

"I am not aware of any petition drive at this time…but I can admit that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction of her leadership," he said.

Sobolewski admitted that he is in favor of an "indefinite contract" for instructional staff at NMC. However, faculty members have agreed to push for this after first addressing the college's accreditation problems.

"The general agreement is to push it after the accreditation because we're not in favor of any distraction on the accreditation work being prepared by the institution," he said.

NMC instructors are given two-year contracts, which could be terminated with or without cause.

"That contract would be basically like what we have…but with no expiration date," he said.

A similar request died with previous college administrations.

Sobolewski's term is up until the end of this semester.

Fernandez defends herself

Fernandez yesterday addressed the issues about her unpopularity, saying the institution is governed by policies and procedures that she strictly adheres to.

When asked to comment about employees' fear of expressing their views, she said: "As an institution of higher learning, the staff and faculty are welcome to freely express their views about various issues. We have never terminated anyone because they expressed their opinion. I maintain an open-door policy to all employees so they can approach me directly."

Additionally, Fernandez said faculty and staff members at the college also have many outlets where they can share their views on important matters and decisions that are considered.

These include the College Council, the Budget and Finance Committee, and other governance groups. Staff and faculty members also have representatives that sit as honorary members on the Board of Regents. They also have their supervisors and managers if they want to air some concerns.

On the indefinite contracts for faculty, she said the issue is under consideration and undergoing due diligent review. It will be considered by the shared governance structure of NMC once it is ready for that process.

"Given the monumental tasks of resolving accreditation deficiencies that date back to 2000 and working with a significantly reduced budget, we have had to make some extremely difficult decisions in the past few months to ensure that we continue to offer high quality programs and services to our students," she said, adding that some of those decisions may have been unfavorably received by some faculty members or employees; nonetheless they needed to be made.

Despite these issues, she said their resolve in meeting accreditation requirements remains strong and "reaffirming the college's accreditation will be my administration's focus in the weeks ahead."

Vote of confidence

As what other institutions practice in determining the effectiveness of their leaders, a vote of confidence among staff and employees is being prepared for recommendation to the college's board and leadership.

"The idea is to know whether the leader still has the vote of confidence of her/his peers which is very important in the success of a leadership or organization," an instructional staff said.

Meantime, Paz Calvo, a nursing instructor who has been with the college for about a year, said she support the NMC president, especially in this time of accreditation problems.

"For me, she's doing a great job especially in trying to find good instructors for students," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

An instructor who has been with the college for a year said: "Based on my opinion and experience here at NMC, the president's leadership is doing a good job of finding all possible ways to address concerns."

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER
Couples that participated in the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Rally held at the American Memorial Park amphitheater on Feb. 7 2009, pose for a souvenir shot after the event.
REY BELGADO

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Public input sought on proposed tourism visa regs

The Marianas Visitors Authority is urging the CNMI community to submit comments supporting a delay in the implementation of proposed tourism visa regulations that are estimated to cut local tourism revenues by 24.5 percent.

MVA and its members have launched a petition campaign urging the Department of Homeland Security to delay implementation of rules to establish U.S. ports of entry in the CNMI and implementing the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program. The interim final rules of the visa waiver program do not allow visa waivers for two of the CNMI's main tourism markets, the People's Republic of China and Russia.

Tenorio

"We're going to have severe losses in our local economy and local jobs if the CNMI loses visa waivers for visitors from the People's Republic of China and Russia," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "We're taking the initiative to make the community more aware of how losing visitors from PRC and Russia will affect their livelihood, and we hope they will join us in voicing their concerns about excluding these two groups of visitors."

The interim final rules estimate that the CNMI will lose 16 percent of visitors from PRC and 3 percent of visitors from Russia, a figure MVA says is "grossly underestimated."

"Our travel partners tell us there is just no way visitors from PRC and Russia are going to choose the CNMI as their destination if they have to invest the time and money necessary to get a U.S. visa." said Tenorio. "We're going to lose 95 percent of these markets if they are not included in the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program."

The petition requests the delay of the start of the transition period for 180 days or until the required additional security measures are in place and the DHS has made a determination that visitors from China and Russia can participate in the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program and amends the regulations.

Individuals interested in signing or circulating petitions may visit the MVA office or download a copy and instructions at www.mymarianas.com. Petitions should be returned to MVA by Feb. 27, 2009, for compilation and delivery to DHS. Comments on the rules may also be submitted directly to DHS at www.regulations.gov, enter USCBP-2009-0001. ***(PR)***

Bank sues Glad over $.2M debt

Bank of Saipan Inc. has sued businessman Anthony A. Glad and his business for allegedly refusing to pay his debt, now amounting to $204,565.

The bank filed a foreclosure lawsuit against Anthony Glad, Joyce C. Glad, and Glady's Saipan Inc.

The bank, through counsel S. Joshua Berger, asked the Superior Court to order the defendants to pay within three months of the court's decision damages plus accruing interest, court costs, and attorney's fees.

Berger requested the court to order a public auction of the defendants' mortgaged property if no payment is made within the three-month period.

Berger stated in the complaint that Anthony Glad is an Indian citizen who is frequently off-island.

He said Joyce Glad is a U.S. citizen currently off-island and may still be residing in California.

The complaint did not indicate the relationship between Anthony and Joyce Glad.

Berger said the original loan amounts were $150,000 and $29,550.

"However, as of Dec. 3, 2008, the date of the notice of default, defendants owe plaintiff $204,565," the lawyer said.

He said more than 30 days have elapsed since the notice of default was served upon the defendants and yet they have failed to cure the default.

Last month, Golden Bird Corp., a company that rents out commercial space, sued the owner of the Island Medical Center for allegedly failing to pay rent for its leased space in Susupe and for leaving the premises in bad condition.

Golden Bird Corp. alleged that Micronesian Health Corp. owed the company $76,658.

Anthony Glad served as vice president of Micronesian Health Corp. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Farmers take steps to prevent reliance on imports

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The newly formed Farmers Support Group has organized the CNMI's first agricultural summit, driven by the goal to prevent too much reliance on imported food items and to boost the local economy.

The two-day summit started yesterday at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort and the participants will wrap up the activity today with representatives of government agencies to discuss their roles.

The FSG is composed of the Saipan Municipal Council represented by its vice chair, Ray Camacho, NMC-CREES headed by director Ross Manglona, and Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Dr. Ignacio Dela Cruz.

Camacho explained that the main objective of the summit is to expand the agricultural sector not only among the farmers themselves but with the involvement of the business sector, the Chamber of Commerce and the Korean Association, which owns most of the retail businesses.

"We are doing this to create a venue for dialogue to be able for everyone to work together," Camacho said.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, who delivered the welcome address, assured the government's full support to the FSG.

Camacho said some members of the Legislature attended the opening and shared their willingness to entertain ideas that can be developed into law.

"After the summit, we will gather everything that we have accomplished during two days and put them into action plans," Camacho said.

He said that they want to establish a way of preventing the further intrusion of agricultural products into Saipan, which will give the opportunity for local farmers to expand.

Some of the expected outcomes of the summit include agricultural industry plans, review and address of policy and procedural changes, resources for grants, industry improvement plans, personnel training and professional development and technical assistance programs.

Century Insurance president David Sablan gave the opening remarks while NMC Community Development Institute director Dave Attao discussed the purpose and the ground rules for the sessions.

Labor successful with backlog project but falls behind in processing appeals

The Department of Labor has successfully completed its backlog project relating to labor applications and labor cases, but it is falling behind in processing appeals.

Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas said the number of labor appeals increased last year because of the labor applications and the labor case backlog project initiated by the department.

In a report, San Nicolas noted that when they cleaned up the backlog of labor cases and agency cases, a small percent of those decisions were appealed.

With respect to labor applications, he said when they worked on the backlog, a portion of those were denied, and some of those denials were appealed.

"Although the numbers of appeals are not large, it takes time to process each appeal, and we were falling behind because of the new workload," the Secretary said.

He said when the backlog project was initiated, they employed "outside lawyers" to assist Labor on a temporary basis, and set up a new monitoring system within the department.

As of July 15, 2008, Labor is reportedly almost entirely current with respect to old cases.

San Nicolas said the performance benchmark for the 2008 and 2009 appeals is to issue opinions within 60 days of the receipt of the appeal. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

FAKE

From Page 1

who conducted a counterfeit training at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's office in Garapan yesterday.

"It's serious enough to have the feds here," said Tarkong, referring to the visiting trainers, U.S. Secret Service special agents Virgil D. "Gus" Reichle Jr. and Mac Bostic.

He said Reichle and Bostic held the training for business and law enforcement representatives due to a recent rash of counterfeit complaints on the island.

Tarkong said that advances in computer and printing technology have now made it possible for these fake bills to be made on the island.

"But we do have some leads," he emphasized, declining to elaborate so not to jeopardize the ongoing investigation.

Tarkong said that, as the Crime Stoppers coordinator, he received a complaint about counterfeit money during the Christmas holiday.

He said the Department of Public Safety also received a total of eight active complaints of fake dollar bills during and after the holiday season.

Tarkong said he then spoke with Reichle to alert him to the problem. Reichle, who is based in Guam, came to the island a couple of weeks ago to follow up on the complaints.

The Crime Stoppers coordinator said most of the victims are stores.

He said the suspects started with the $5 and $10 denominations, but now they are circulating $50 and $100 bills.

"Regardless of denominations, it's still a federal offense," Tarkong pointed out.

He said one suspect was recently arrested, but more people are expected to be caught soon.

Tarkong said that people dealing with methamphetamine or "ice" are the same people believed to be behind the fake money circulating on the islands.

Tarkong was among the participants in yesterday's training. Reichle also conducted the same training at the Saipan Grand Hotel in February 2008. That time, he told *Saipan Tribune* that counterfeit U.S. currency was not a big problem yet on the islands.

ARRIVALS

From Page 1

increase in arrivals from Japan over last January, the MVA said in a statement.

Arrivals from Japan posted an 11 percent increase in arrivals over a year ago to 22,302, yet still dropped significantly for the second month in a row. Holiday travel during the Lunar New Year boosted January arrivals from China by 27 percent to 4,427. Also, two charter flights by Vladivostok Airlines arrived in January, raising the monthly total to 1,135 visitors from Russia, or 60 percent more than last January.

"We're pleased to see the small gains in arrivals in January, especially with tourism being down worldwide. It's an indication that our CNMI travel industry's investment in the China and Russia markets can make a difference for the CNMI," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Our greater concern is for the rest of year, particularly with anticipated Northwest Airlines service reductions and if we lose the visa waiver for China and Russia under federalization."

The CNMI's primary source market of Korea posted a third consecutive month of loss with 23 percent fewer arrivals than January 2008—8,676 visitors. According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the number of Koreans traveling overseas last year was nearly 10 percent lower than the previous year amid the global economic recession and the depreciation of the won.

In particular, in November and December last year, the number of Koreans departing the country dropped 33.8 percent and 38.1 percent respectively, from a year earlier.

Hana Tour, the nation's largest travel agent, expects the slump to continue at least until the end of the first half of the year. The falling Korean won is also discouraging Korean consumers from spending their money on overseas travel.

Arrivals to the CNMI from Guam and the mainland U.S. were also down last month to 521 and 1,405 arrivals, respectively. ***(MVA)***

SENATE

From Page 1

Jude Hofschneider, the motion to override was made by Sen. Felix Mendiola.

Prior to voting for the measure, Joseph Mendiola, who is also the Tinian Legislative Delegation chairman, urged his colleagues to suspend the decision until the House acts on the standing bills being asked by the upper house.

"I am voting for the override. But what I am asking the members is to suspend the voting today until the House finishes its session on Friday to see whether they will act on the standing bills related to this budget legislation…because those bills were supposed to be included in this budget bill. However, there was an agreement that they will do it in the form of a standalone bill," Mendiola said during yesterday's session, referring to the restoration of the salaries of resident directors for Rota and Tinian, which was not considered in the budget legislation.

Disappointed over the "unwillingness" of colleagues to put off the vote, Mendiola later said: "I am supportive of the override…but I apologize that I can't affirm my vote if we will do it today."

Sen. Maria Frica Pangelinan, chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs, pushed for the immediate action.

"Delaying the passage of this bill may give the governor more avenue to make reductions on the budget projection. We don't want to take this chance. We don't want to give the governor time to stall this override decision," she told the other senators.

Before the session, members went into an hour-long leadership session to come to a common decision.

'Override a compromise'

While admitting that he recognizes Sen. Mendiola's point, Sen. Paul Manglona said it is about time the Senate makes its own statement on the budget.

"We were not accorded the chance to do it the last time [override] because the House failed to pass it. It is time for the Senate to make a statement. I understand that from numerous meetings with the House members, 'override is a commitment,'" Manglona said.

The lawmaker expressed "confusion" over the recent stand of these lawmakers.

"I was under the assumption that everyone is committed to the override…but what's happening now?" he asked, adding that both chambers did everything to have a budget plan, which may just go to waste.

Manglona wants the Senate to take action now, whatever the House may decide on the override.

"If the House won't pass it…at least in the Senate, we did it," he said.

'Continuous hiring'

Sen. Jude Hofschneider, for his part, said that what concerns him most is the government's continuous hiring practice.

"The first time it was vetoed, it was because of a decrease in revenue. Now, with the Northwest decision…I don't question the administration's arguments and justification…but what concerns me is the continuous hiring," he told members.

In passing the override, "At least we can stop the bleeding…if I may."

He revealed that over 900 were hired by the government in the last three fiscal years and whatever "pathetic" revenue the CNMI has had, override "is the right thing to do."

STIMULUS

From Page 1

Formally referred to as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the so-called Collins-Nelson compromise), the $838 billion emergency economic stimulus bill now heads to the House of Representatives for a compromise. President Obama hopes to sign the stimulus bill into law by the end of the week.

Language specific to the CNMI and American Samoa in the amendment calls for GAO to follow through on provisions of Public Law 110-28 to submit a report on the impact of the minimum wage increases in the two U.S. insular areas.

The amendment called for GAO to submit the report no earlier than March 15, 2009, and not later than April 15, 2009—a maximum of 62 days from today.

The GAO report should include:

■ the rates of employment and living standards of workers, with full consideration of the other factors that impact rates of employment and the living standards of workers such as inflation in the cost of food, energy, and other commodities; and

■ estimate the impact of any further wage increases on rates of employment and living standards of workers in American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, with full consideration of the other factors that may impact the rates of employment and living standards of workers, including assessing how the profitability of major private sector firms may be impacted by wage increases in comparison to other factors such as energy costs and value of tax benefits.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial yesterday thanked U.S. lawmakers who were instrumental in inserting this amendment to the stimulus bill.

Fitial specifically thanked Delegate Eni Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa) as well as senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) for working to add critical pro-CNMI language that addresses federal minimum wage legislation affecting the CNMI.

"I especially want to thank my good friend Congressman Faleomavaega, who took it upon himself to successfully champion the American Samoa and CNMI language in the U.S. Senate bill. In the years that the CNMI did not have a member of Congress, Eni was always a friend to the CNMI and he continues to keep the CNMI in mind when it matters most," he said.

Fitial added, "These reports will alert members of Congress and Administration officials to that which we already know—that during this economic depression in the CNMI, another increase in the minimum wage this year will further harm our businesses and our people as we struggle to rebound from the economic downturn."

"We ask Congress to take a close look at these reports and consider offering American Samoa and the CNMI a deferment in the next increase in the minimum wage so that the tourism industry and other businesses throughout the CNMI can regain some economic footing in this very challenging economic environment," said Fitial.

Fitial met with both Faleomavaega and Murkowski on this issue during his last trip to Washington, D.C. to witness the inauguration of President Obama.

The CNMI chief executive will again travel to Washington, D.C. later this month and meet with the members of the House and Senate who were responsible for getting this language included in the stimulus bill.

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18 GCA students Hawaii-bound for research

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Shown in this photo are the 18 students and four teachers of Grace Christian Academy who are bound for a science research trip to Hawaii and California.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Grace Christian Academy is sending 18 of its students for a 14-day trip to Hawaii and California, where they will research on the conflict between science and culture.

The students will leave Sunday morning, accompanied by four teachers led by GCA board chair Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella.

Kinsella said the students will have the opportunity to interact with some of today's leading scientists and learn about how the advancements of science affect people and their culture, specifically in Hawaii.

The delegation will be visiting the IMILOA Astronomy Center and talk with the director of the Hawaii Institute of Astronomy.

They will also interview cultural leaders who oppose any plans to build more observatories on the sacred mountain of Mauna Kea, which has a deep religious and cultural significance for native Hawaiians. Some of these groups are the Anaina Hou (political), Sierra Club (environmental), and Royal Order of Kamehameha I (cultural).

Kinsella said there is a plan to build the world's largest and most advanced telescope in the area—called the TMT or Thirty Meter Telescope—because it is considered one of the best locations on the planet for such a project.

But the natives of Hawaii have been opposing this and succeeded several times to stop the plan.

Kinsella said the students would study the historical and political underpinnings of "the clash of science and culture."

The students include Johnny T. Aldan Jr., Phivina Atalig, Bethanie Ann Batallones, Russell Elson O. Buenaventura, Nathan Robert L. Chargualaf, John Conti, Abilaksha Denise Das, Mikiotti Evangelista, Kimberly Hofschneider, Da Hea Hong, Ernest Jay B. Javier, Dae Won Jeon, Nicollette Lopez, Andrew Orsini IV, Keala Peters, Keith Jaosn F. Sablan, James Sakamoto, and Tiffany U. Tokoyama.

The accompanying teachers are Kinsella, Elaine Kinsella, Leah Dalusung and Frederick Fatialofa.

The students will tour the summit of the Subaru and Keck astronomical observatories, considered as two of the premiere land-based telescopes in the world.

They will also tour the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, attend a special lecture at the Keck Base Headquarters in Weimea where the scientists do their work, and they will experience a traditional Hawaiian lu'au in Kona before flying to Oahu to meet with Dr. Rof Peter Kudritzki, director of the Hawaii Institute of Astronomy and a professor at the University of Hawaii.

From Hawaii, they will meet Fr. Gray Sanunders, project director of the TMT Research center at the California Technical University.

They are also planning to visit the Spitzer Space Center, Wilson Observatory, where the legendary astronomer Edwin Hubble made his ground-breaking discoveries on the 100" Hooker telescope in the early 20th century.

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Rota company ordered to vacate CPA property

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has terminated its lease agreement with Rota Terminal and Transfer Co. Inc. after the firm failed to settle its over $400,000 arrears with the agency. The amount does not include interest, costs and expenses incurred by CPA for its collection efforts.

RT&T has until Friday, Feb. 13, to vacate and surrender the facility to the CPA management.

Saipan Tribune learned that CPA sent numerous letters advising the Rota company about its obligation. However, RT&T's repeated silence and inaction has left CPA with no other option than to terminate the lease agreement signed by both parties in January 1996.

As of Nov. 3, 2008, the company's past due accounts totaled $400,704.42, which the CPA advised will still be collected through legal means.

CPA, in its attempt to generate revenues and collections this fiscal year, has decided to run after delinquent tenants and concessionaires who have been in "default" for many years.

It was learned that CPA sent the Rota company a special supplemental statement of accounts for 1996-2008, detailing the percentage of the firm's accounts still owing CPA.

On Aug. 8, 2008, Oct. 13, 2008, and Nov. 13, 2008, the company was sent a notice of unpaid sum due and demands for payment, which then totaled $340,000.

RT&T allegedly failed repeatedly to cure the default and pay the amount owing and even neglected to contact CPA about any payment options.

The company is owned by Victor B. Hocog and Nicolas A. Songsong.

ACT: Amend PSS policy on 'highly qualified teachers'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Association of Commonwealth Teachers is pushing for an amendment to the "highly qualified teachers" policy set by the Board of Education after finding the criteria to be among the "highest" in the region.

ACT president Betty Miller said yesterday that the BOE has yet to respond to their request.

"We're waiting for a response or invitation from the BOE to discuss our proposed amendments," she told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that they will follow up the matter in the board's next special meeting.

Miller said the request to repeal the policy was a result of the study they conducted last year where they found that PSS has the highest qualified teacher standards not only in the Pacific but also compared to other schools in the United States.

BOE sets three requirements for a teacher to be classified as HQT—to have a degree, a valid teaching certificate, and passing the Praxis tests.

Upon implementation of this rule, those teachers who have yet to comply with the requirements received a pay cut, reducing their salaries to a first year teacher rate, which is $28,000 regardless of years of service, based on the compensation plan adopted by the board in 2006.

This concern has raised strong opposition from "veteran" teachers and colleagues who have been affected by the reduction.

ACT's report indicates that Praxis exams are based on U.S. educational standards, yet many of the CNMI's teachers did not receive their training or education in the mainland, which is deemed "disadvantageous" to local teachers.

According to the report, under the No Child Left Behind Act, all teachers must be highly qualified by the year 2010. However, the CNMI BOE has determined that all teachers, regardless of educational background or years of experience, must pass the Praxis exams in order to be deemed highly qualified.

It was also found that "there are no funding ramifications for violating requirements for highly qualified teachers."

Current PSS records showed that 66 percent of its teachers are HQT.

PSS score compared to other states

The PSS' passing score of 146 in elementary education was found to be higher than many U.S. schools. Of the 28 states reporting, 11 have lower scores than the CNMI at 135-145: two states have a 135 passing score; three have a 137 passing score; one state has 140; three have 143; and one has a 140.

Median for these scores is 144, which is still lower than the CNMI passing of 146 for elementary education.

For middle school math, the CNMI's passing score is 150. Of the 27 states reporting, 16 have lower scores than the CNMI. These scores range from 139-149: two states have set 139 score for math in middle school; one state has 141; another state has 142; three states have 143; two have 145; six states have 148; and one state has 149 score. Median score is 144 or lower than the CNMI's 150 passing grade for math in junior high schools.

For middle school language, the CNMI has set 158 as its passing score, while of the 27 states that report their results, 15 have lower scores than the CNMI and these range from 143-157.

Social studies, which also has a 150 passing score, was found higher than 10 other states which have 135-140 score.

Same results are anticipated in other content areas as cited by the report.

For Praxis 1, the study reveals that PSS chose to adopt 170 as the passing score for all three areas or a composite score of 510.

Marianas Navy chief named for promotion

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) William D. French, who is currently serving as commander of the Navy Region Marianas/U.S. Pacific Command, has been nominated by President Obama for appointment to the rank of rear admiral.

French's nomination was announced yesterday by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, together with that of 25 others, all of them lower half Navy rear admirals nominated for promotion to the rank of rear admiral.

French is also the U.S. Pacific Command Representative for Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau and is the commander of the U.S. Naval Forces, Marianas, Guam. ***(DoD)***

CLEANUP KITS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The NMI Chapter of the American Red Cross recently donated 400 cleanup kits to the PSS and the private schools to be used in the beautification and maintenance of their campuses. The kits included mops, brooms, scrubs, and buckets among others. John Hirsh, executive director of the American Red Cross, noted that during relief operations, PSS classrooms are used as shelters and must be returned to its original condition for classes to resume. These cleanup kits can help the PSS ensure that their classrooms and facilities are kept clean for the children. In photo from left to right, J.D. Tenorio, Red Cross Emergency Services director; Lucy Blanco-Maratita, PSS board chairperson; John Hirsh; Kinai Salas, SVES principal; Charlie Kenty, PSS; Dr. Rita A. Sablan, PSS Commissioner; Herman Guerrero, PSS board vice chairman; and Alkantro Sarapio, PSS PICO.

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NMC leaders participate in nat'l summit

In an effort to advance support and advocacy for the Northern Marianas College and other community colleges, NMC Board of Regents chair Charles Cepeda and college president Dr. Carmen Fernandez are currently in Washington D.C. to attend the 2009 Community College National Legislative Summit.

The Summit provides the opportunity for community college leaders and trustees to help shape national policy and, more importantly, advocate for critical legislative and funding support. The event coincides with Congress' deliberations of allocations that are part of President Obama's economic stimulus package.

"In light of the national and local economic downturn, our participation in this important meeting ensures that the needs and priorities of community colleges are communicated clearly to the new Administration," said Cepeda.

Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan will also be informed about what is being requested from other colleges around the country so that the needs of NMC are also considered in actions that will be taken in the U.S. Congress, Cepeda added.

The National Legislative Summit, which is being held Feb. 9-11, is organized by the Association of Community College Trustees, a non-profit educational organization of governing board members. The organization represents more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States.

In addition to visits to the U.S. House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Executive Branch, the Summit agenda includes policy sessions on earmarking strategies, addressing budget challenges, and effective advocacy. The program also includes presentations and speeches by notable individuals, including U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Fernandez's participation in the Summit is funded by a grant from the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council, which is composed of CEOs and presidents of the region's colleges and universities.

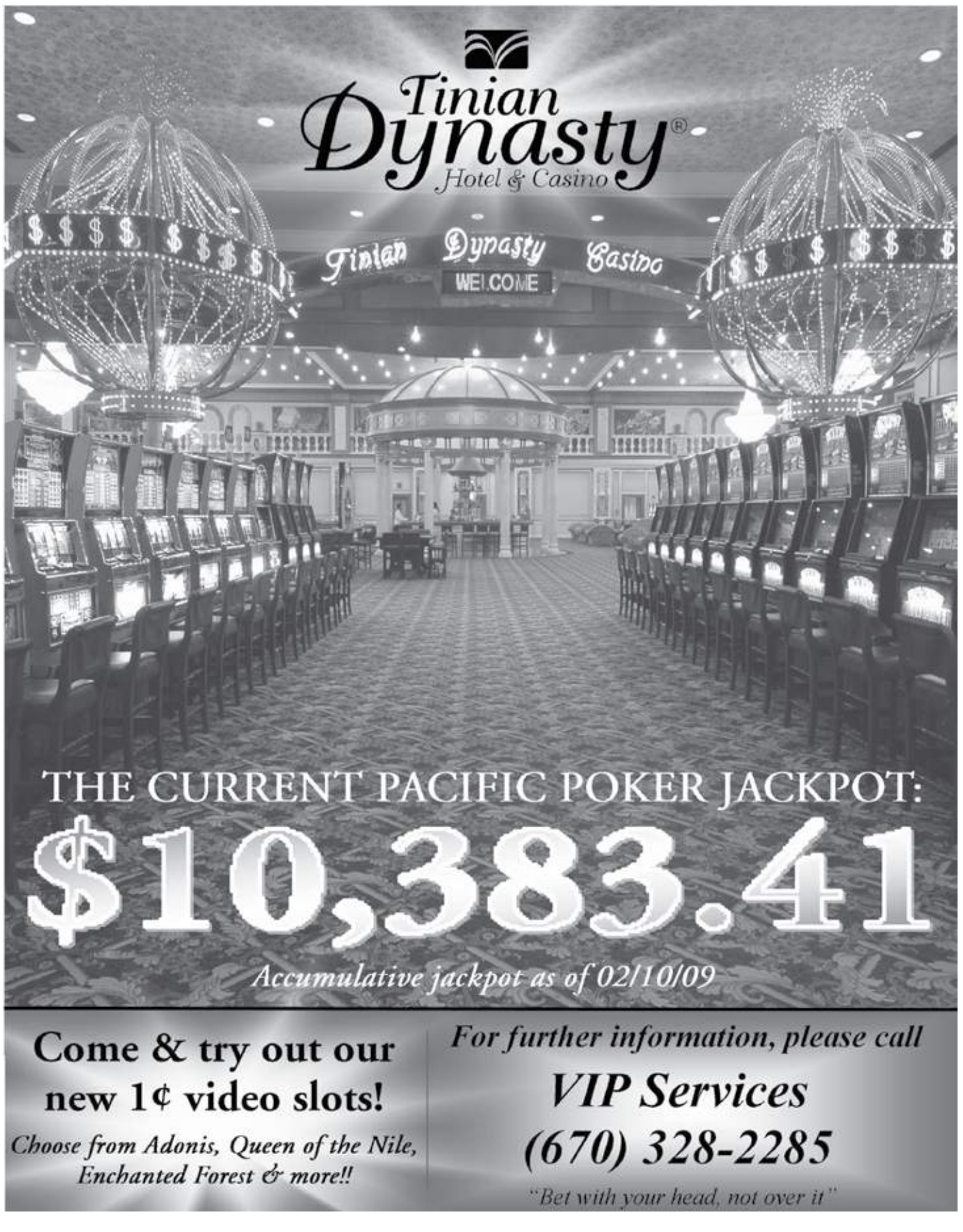
The PPEC's purpose includes encouraging and developing regional planning of postsecondary education throughout the Pacific; serving as a forum to address common educational issues and fostering cooperation in solving common problems facing Pacific people and their environment; and encouraging the sharing of resources and expertise among members to promote the wise use of limited resources. ***(NMC)***

New TWIC compliance date for A. Samoa

HONOLULU—The Coast Guard announced Tuesday that April 14, 2009, is the new Transportation Worker Identification Credential compliance date for owners and operators of facilities located within American Samoa in the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port Zone of Honolulu.

This compliance date has been extended from Feb. 12, 2009, due to a large percentage of foreign maritime workers in American Samoa who are not required to comply with United States immigration laws. This population is not issued a visa by the U.S. Department of State and therefore does not meet the immigration standards required for a TWIC.

The extension provides sufficient time for the U.S. Coast Guard, in consultation with the Transportation Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State, to determine if an equivalent visa category will be mandated or whether TWIC requirements for facilities in American Samoa will be reconsidered, as it was in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 12, 1999

House OKs CIP plan

In a bid to jump-start the sluggish economy, the House of Representatives yesterday set in motion a plan of the CNMI government to tap millions of dollars in federal funding after members passed a legislation to appropriate close to $23 million for Capital Improvement Projects. This represents the first batch of projects under a recently drafted CIP master plan outlining 50 priority projects on Saipan, Tinian and Rota which will cost about $154 million over a seven-year period. House Bill 11-380, filed by Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Karl T. Reyes, has identified some $11.46 million from local revenues to match an equal amount provided by the federal government to finance the massive infrastructure development in the commonwealth.

House Agenda

The House of Representatives held its second successive session yesterday to follow up on unfinished agenda last Wednesday. Several bills were passed and resolutions were adopted. Because it is election year, a House joint resolution adopted during the four-hour session sought the creation of six additional full-time employees at the Board of Elections for the midterm elections in November. Rep. Heinz Hofschneider assured representatives that the adoption will not have a force of law as it will be up to the Tenorio administration whether to hire additional employees for BOE to properly perform its duties.

February 12, 2001

FAA cites need to install tighter security measures

Small islands like the Northern Marianas and Guam can be used by international terrorists as transit point to launch destructive activities in major Asian countries, as well as in Australia and the mainland United States. Federal Aviation Administration Security Liaison Officer Donald A. Slechta disclosed that although the Pacific Region is less likely to be the target of international terrorists, it can be the hopping point of agitators bound for other countries Terrorists who target bigger countries like the mainland US can easily travel from one island nation to another armed with fictitious documents and falsified travel papers.

Senate delays Wiseman's confirmation

It was an upbeat atmosphere at the Senate with the session hall gallery filled with spectators— which has not been the usual case—hoping to witness history unfold late Friday morning. An announcement from Senate President Paul A. Manglona minutes after the session was officially called to order transformed the upbeat mood into waves of frustrations and disappointments, as it rendered the gallery literally empty. The Senate has decided to delay the confirmation of lawyer David S. Wiseman's nomination as Superior Court associate judge, pending the conduct of a public hearing by the he powerful Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations.

February 12, 2002

In accidental shooting, Benavente, 6 others charged

The Attorney General's Office has filed formal charges against Anthony Tenorio Benavente and six other individuals who allegedly participated in a target shooting practice the day a seven-year-old girl was fatally shot on the head in Talofofo last month. Among the defendants, Benavente, 39, was levied with more serious charges, to include involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault and battery, resulting from the death of the accidental shooting victim, who happened to be his niece.

Mostly 'old faces' in Babauta Cabinet

Gov. Juan N. Babauta yesterday announced a slew of new appointments and nominees to his official family, including four Cabinet-level nominees and two special assistants. The new Cabinet nominees are Commerce Secretary Frank Villanueva, who will be assuming a new post as Secretary of the Department of Finance; former congressman Thomas B. Pangelinan, who was appointed Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources; John L. Babauta as Secretary of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs; and former congressman John S. Reyes as Secretary of the Department of Public Works.

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Bang for the bucks

President Obama was back on the hustings this week, promoting an $800 billion-plus stimulus package at a town meeting in economically distressed Elkhart, Ind. "It is the right size, it is the right scope," Mr. Obama said. Of course, it is still not entirely clear what "it" is. The House has produced an $819 billion plan that emphasizes new federal spending over tax relief. The Senate is working on an $827 billion proposal tilted more toward tax cuts, in order to garner sufficient moderate Republican support to prevent a filibuster. The country won't really know what it's getting until the two chambers hammer out a compromise.

As Mr. Obama said Monday night, a stimulus bill is badly needed, and soon. And the differences between the House and Senate measures are not large. Both would spend $47 billion to extend and slightly increase unemployment benefits; increase spending for food stamps; incorporate Mr. Obama's proposal for a $500-per-worker, $1,000-per-couple tax credit over the next two years; and raise the earned-income tax credit for the working poor. The relative consensus on these points is welcome and not that surprising, since they represent the least controversial examples of short-term, quick-spending aid in the two bills.

Sens. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, worked to scrub some less plausibly stimulative stuff from the Senate bill. But that measure still contains some dubious provisions, especially on the tax side. A $15,000 tax credit for new home purchases this year, which would cost more than $35 billion, looks especially wasteful. The proposal, drafted by Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., is supposed to stimulate the moribund housing market. Actually, because it is not limited to first-time homebuyers, the credit would do little to reduce swollen inventories: Homeowners who used this tax break to get a new house would have to put their old one up for sale. The Senate bill would also create an $11 billion deduction for sales taxes on car purchases and auto loan interest, a proposal sponsored by Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md. It's unclear how many people would be lured into the new-car market, already rich with dealer incentives, by this additional one. Given the modest probable benefits, Congress should cut these provisions and consider devoting at least some of the savings to spending that is likely to provide more immediate bang for the buck.

The Senate bill also includes a $69 billion "patch" for the alternative minimum tax, without which many middle-income taxpayers would face a stiff tax increase. It was probably inevitable that Congress would enact this measure without paying for it this year. But, since the biggest benefits would go to relatively well-off taxpayers unlikely to increase spending, and since AMT relief was probably already factored into household plans for this year anyway, it's hard to see how this belongs in an economic stimulus bill.

Congress is almost at the finish line. Ms. Collins and other moderates have pushed back effectively against some of the more egregious spending provisions in the House bill. Now the conference committee should do the same to a few excessive tax breaks in the Senate bill, and then let Congress promptly send the product to Mr. Obama.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Perhaps love

"Some say love is holding on; some say letting go. Some say love is everything, and some say they don't know."—John Denver, American singer and songwriter

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

As we prepare to celebrate Valentine's Day, I thought it would be appropriate to examine this word, feeling, and expression called "love." Writers, artists, poets, and philosophers have made it the central theme of movies, books, poetry, plays, great art, and songs. Since recorded history, wars have been fought over, obstacles overcome because of, and lives forever changed by this thing called love.

Even though four simple letters can spell "love," there are nearly 30 different definitions in the dictionary that try to adequately express this intensely subjective word. And every person has their own distinct perspective on what it really means to them. Rather than focus on the word, let's look at the essence of love as it evolves and matures throughout an individual's life, and I'm going to start each phase with some lines from John Denver's song *"Perhaps Love"* to add some poetic expression.

"Perhaps love is like a resting place; a shelter from the storm. It exists to give you comfort; it is there to keep you warm."

As a young child, love is spontaneously given and received. A baby is bathed in the sights and sounds of love, and as the child is raised in a healthy environment, he or she enjoys the comfort and peace that comes from a home that is filled with unconditional love. The home is a shelter from the storm of a cruel world, and becomes a resting place where a child can be nurtured and encouraged.

"Perhaps love is like a window; perhaps an open door. It invites you to come closer; it wants to show you more."

As an older child or teenager, love begins to take on a physical dimension where the opposite sex is noticed and becomes intriguing. The spontaneity of love is replaced with a more reserved love for someone special. This is the time when one experiences their first infatuation, and risks the possible pain of rejection by venturing into the uncharted realm of romantic love. This time of discovery allows teenagers to meet people and develop a sense of not only whom they like, but to learn more about themselves.

"Love to some is like a cloud; to some as strong as steel. To some a way of living; to some a way you feel."

Love can be intoxicating for young adults who have found their true companion. The world becomes a vibrant place to live. Everything is exciting as a couple spends as much time as possible with each other. The first thought of the day and the last one at night is reserved for that special someone who makes your life complete. Even though you feel like you're floating on a cloud, your love seems as strong as steel. This love encourages people to make a commitment to spend the rest of their life with one special person. Eventually, that love blossoms into the birth of a child where love is renewed.

"Perhaps love is like the ocean: full of conflict, full of pain. Like a fire when it's cold outside, or thunder when it rains."

Adults who have lived with each other for several years know that life is like an ocean wave that has its ups and downs. Children, jobs, and other commitments tend to pull a couple in different directions, and sacrifices are made that demonstrate their love in ways that their children or spouse may not realize. Those who have experienced more thunder in their relationships may find the conflict too painful to bear, while couples who have weathered the storms of life together find comfort in one another's arms, and continue to renew their love as it matures over time.

"And in those times of trouble, when you are most alone, the memory of love will bring you home."

Love for a couple who have been together for many years may be the rod that allows them to hold on to cherished memories. Traveling together through the different seasons of their lives has bonded them together in ways that the casual observe will never understand. As children leave home, the couple has more time to redefine their relationship and rediscover the love that brought them together.

Perhaps death has caused an unwelcome physical separation, but the emotional memories are what sustain the surviving spouse until their sweet reunion is fulfilled.

"If I should live forever and all my dreams come true, my memories of love will be of you."

Perhaps true love can be expressed as a unified soul that is shared by two bodies. Over the years I have learned to better understand what love truly means as my bride of 24 years and I have traveled through the various phases of life to discover the love that binds one soul to another and has caused me to become a better person. I love you even more today than when we were first married, Janel—still my anything and everything.

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LAND OWNERSHIP CONTROL STIFLES GROWTH, DEV'T

Present condition of the NMI economy

By JOSE S. DELA CRUZ
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

First of a six-part series

The economy of the Northern Mariana Islands took a huge fall in 2005 (about four years ago) when Japan Airline, the major air carrier servicing the CNMI from Japan, stopped its regular air service to Saipan. The reason given for JAL's decision to stop its air service to Saipan was its high operating cost which was spiraling upwards due to the escalating cost of jet fuel. In other words, the service to Saipan was no longer profitable for JAL. It was a business decision; and we know that air carriers, like any other business entity, are in business to make a profit, that is earn a fair return on their investment—not to continue operating at a loss.

The decision of JAL to end its regular air service to the CNMI had a devastating effect on the economy of the CNMI, whose key industry—tourism—is directly dependent on air service, particularly air service from Japan where most of the visitors to the CNMI come from. The Marianas Visitors Authority, which developed in 2006 a new Five-Year Plan with the goal of reaching an annual visitor mark of one million visitors by the Year 2010, had to revise its numbers and rethink its marketing strategy.

The visitor industry, as we know, is probably the most viable industry for the CNMI. It is not labor-intensive, like the garment-manufacturing industry that came to the CNMI 25 years ago to take advantage of the General Headnote 3(a) quota and customs duty exemptions that the CNMI has as a U.S. commonwealth. The garment industry single-handedly brought in thousands of guest workers from China and other countries. As a result, this huge influx of people resulted in a lopsided demographic imbalance for the CNMI. The huge population of guest workers from foreign countries was viewed very unfavorably by the federal government, particularly the U.S. Congress. But the industry was endorsed by CNMI government leaders because of the comparatively substantial revenue that it generated for the treasury of the CNMI government.

About four years ago, the garment manufacturing industry began the process of moving out of the CNMI, after the restriction on the movement of textile products worldwide was lifted by the World Trade Organization. Because of the free movement of textile products worldwide that began in 2005, the competitive advantage that the CNMI used to have over other textile-manufacturing countries ended. Even with the advantage that textile products produced in the CNMI have by being exempted from paying customs duty upon entry into the U.S., it is still cheaper to manufacture textile products in China, Mexico and other Third World countries.

The departure of the garment industry, soon after the departure of JAL, *was the second major blow to the local economy and the* CNMI *government coffer.* Both *adverse economic events happened within the past four years.* The CNMI *government and our political and business leaders have been at a loss as to what could be done to resuscitate and revive the local economy.*

The departure of the garment industry, soon after the departure of JAL, was the second major blow to the local economy and the CNMI government coffer. Both adverse economic events happened within the past four years. The CNMI government and our political and business leaders have been at a loss as to what could be done to resuscitate and revive the local economy. Local businesses have been reeling since from the dramatic downturn in the CNMI economy.

The local government had to institute measures to operate within the reduced government revenue that has declined by almost 40 percent over the past 10 years. Public services have been cut back drastically, and austerity measures have been taken by both the government and the private sector to cushion the impact of the long-running economic decline. Local businesses and CNMI residents have maintained a wait-and-see approach for about five years now; while at the same time wondering when they would have to fold-up and close shop. Some opined last year that the economic recession has bottomed-out. But the global financial recession that began in 2008 has in fact made matters worse.

If the CNMI economic recession has indeed bottomed out (which is clearly not the case), we may be at the bottom for a very long time, unless we begin to do something constructive to start turning our economy around. Such was the reason why I suggested two months ago that our leaders in government and business convene immediately a CNMI economic summit or conference so that we could discuss in earnest what needs to be done to turn our economy around. This paper is an attempt to set forth some possible solutions to the economic predicament the CNMI is in.

To be continued.

Jose S. Dela Cruz is a former justice in the CNMI Supreme Court.

Making sense of the budget veto

By MARIA FRICA T. PANGELINAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Maria Frica T. Pangelinan is a senator in the 16th Northern Marianas Legislature and is chairwoman of the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee.

The Governor has vetoed HB 16-213, HD5, the bill passed by the Legislature for the FY2009 budget. In his letter of disapproval, the Governor has made some statements that deserve clarification.

The letter claims the Legislature "failed to address how the same number of employees and the same programs and operations will continue at the same level with the reduced resources. For example, every department's personnel budget is reduced by 5 percent while the number of employees and their salaries remain intact."

In the Planning and Budgeting Act the Legislature is authorized to set *maximum* FTE levels. These numbers mandate that an expenditure authority *may not exceed* this number. There are no restrictions on employing fewer.

Additionally, there is nothing in HB 16-213, HD5 that supports the governor's statement that salaries remain intact. The bill does not address that level of detail.

In fact, it is appropriate for each expenditure authority to look at their allocation for personnel expenses and adjust their employment levels accordingly.

The veto letter goes on to say that his acceptance of the proposed budget could lead to government shutdowns, payless paydays, or layoffs and that the only option is to implement austerity measures such as have been imposed in the past.

I disagree that there is no other option beyond austerity measures. Austerity measures proved to be fundamentally unfair in their application, not only to lower paid employees, but also because of the many arbitrary and politically driven exemptions that were made. The net savings during the period in which these were applied was less than had been predicted. The measures simply did not work as projected. We must impose strict controls on hiring, and adjust employment levels to stay within budgetary resources.

As unpleasant and frightening as the economic realities appear, the government must operate within its resources.

The governor goes on by objecting to the Legislature monitoring hiring, calling it unconstitutional. Currently it appears that maximum FTE levels are not being observed. The Legislature has the authority to set maximum FTE levels during the budget process. It is time for us to follow up by making sure that these levels are not being exceeded.

Allowing austerity measures to be imposed while allowing hiring to continue without strict controls makes no sense.

Although the provision was also in the first budget bill submitted to the Governor, this time he has objected to the reporting requirement for the Department of Labor, stating that it has no bearing on the budget process. The report from the Department of Labor will in fact be crucial during the budget process for Fiscal Year 2010. The Legislature needs to know how the department is functioning with the workload and employment levels they are operating with in order to properly support their efforts. We are looking for direct feedback from them as current and future events are and will affect their operations.

The Governor claims that the Compact Impact funds are not being properly distributed in the bill. He specified the distribution of Compact Impact funds in his original budget proposal. The first budget bill he vetoed matched this original distribution. This is unchanged in the current bill. Apparently these funds are now not being distributed in the manner described in the governor's budget proposal. This raises questions about why the Legislature was not notified via a budget amendment as provided by law and about where these funds are actually being spent.

The Governor stated in his letter that revenues continue to decline, citing this as an additional reason for his veto. If another revision of estimated revenues is projected the Governor is required to report it to the Legislature. A general discussion of an expected decline without specific numbers is not enough information for the Legislature to act upon.

The reality is that the CNMI government has financial challenges that are outside the scope of what is addressed in the budget. There is the accrued fiscal deficit from prior years, unpaid judgments, land compensation claims, and the unfunded liability owed the defined benefit plan. Even if we make it through FY 2009 without increasing any of these debts, this legislation does little to address them. In the final analysis the government must learn to not spend every penny of its revenues on current operations. It is time to buckle down and spend less so that the debts we have accumulated over the years can be paid.

The bill vetoed by the Governor tightens controls on spending and reporting. While not the entire solution to the fiscal problems of the CNMI government, it is a step in the right direction.

Needless to say, I received the letter vetoing this bill with great disappointment. I will be conferring with my colleagues about where we go from here.

Letter to the Editor

Let the judicial process run its course

As I read your recent article regarding the possibility of impeachment proceedings being taken against Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, I was shocked by the absolute disregard of the rights of the Lt. Governor, especially by the comments of Rep. Tina Sablan.

Ms. Sablan's audacity is only surpassed by her ignorance. The Lt. Governor has constitutional rights just like every citizen. He is vigorously defending himself against the allegations brought against him in a court of law, with all its safeguards for Mr. Villagomez, as well as the government. Ms. Sablan, on the hand, seems to want to convene a good old "Jim Crow" lynch mob and march through the streets, looking to hang the Lt. Governor from the highest tree.

Unless someone changed the Constitution, Lt. Gov. Villagomez is presumed innocent of the pending allegations. Until a jury of his peers decides otherwise, he is innocent.

The prospect of Rep. Tina Sablan conducting impeachment proceeding while at the same time the Lt. Governor is defending himself in court is ridiculous and violates every fiber of our system of justice. The comparison to Governor Blagojevich is misplaced. The Illinois governor was impeached for misconduct unrelated to his possible criminal charges for attempting to "sell" the former Senate seat of President Obama. Another key distinction—Governor Blagojevich has not yet been charged in a court of law prior to the impeachment proceedings being held.

Ms. Sablan is a living, breathing example of the old saying that a "little knowledge in the hands of a fool is a dangerous thing." Let the judicial process run its course and do not presume an innocent man guilty.

Cristy Sablan
San Antonio, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy and windy with scattered showers. East winds 25 to 30 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼76°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

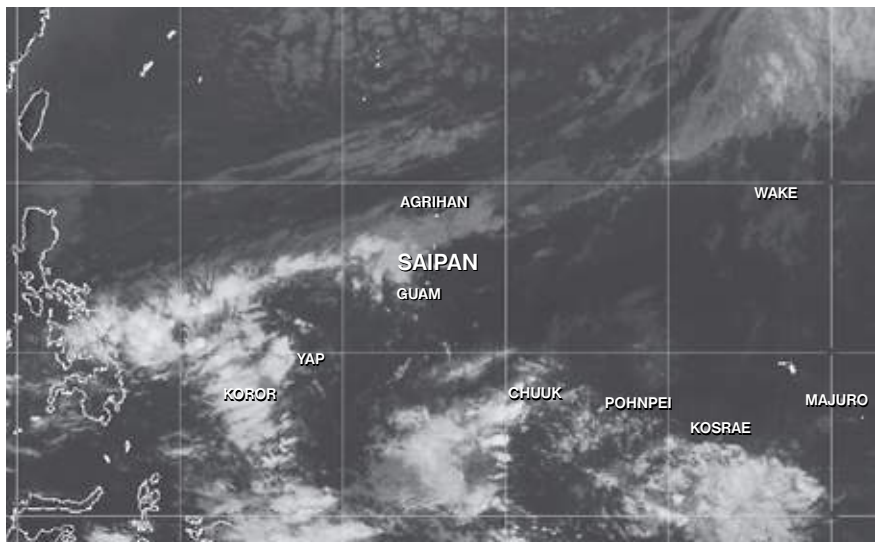
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Rain	▲81	▼74
Palau	Showers	▲86	▼78
Yap	Rain	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Showers	▲87	▼75
Kosrae	Rain	▲85	▼79
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲76	▼68
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲54	▼32
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲77	▼68
Honolulu	Showers	▲77	▼71
London	Cloudy	▲37	▼30
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲62	▼46
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼74
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲67	▼50
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲82	▼67
New York	Windy	▲54	▼34
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲56	▼48
Paris	Showers	▲38	▼26
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲63	▼47
Rome	Showers	▲46	▼29
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼32
San Francisco	Showers	▲55	▼45
Seoul	Showers	▲52	▼40
Tokyo	Sunny	▲53	▼45
Washington, DC	Windy	▲58	▼36

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N164E to near Anatahan at 16N146E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 12N. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 100 miles northwest of the cold front. East of 144E scattered heavier showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring near and up to 100 miles north of the shear line. A surface trough extends from west of Palau at 7N130E to just south of the shear line at 14N136E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring in southerly flow east of the trough within 150 miles either side of a line from 12N133E across Palau to EQ137E. A weak surface trough runs from 1N155E northwestward to 5N151E to 6N147E. Low-level convergence is producing scattered showers mainly west of the trough between the equator and 7N from 145E to 151E. This area is near and southwest of Chuuk. Another weak trough is producing scattered showers south of Kosrae between the equator and 4N from 159E to 169E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers east of Majuro in the area bounded by 3N175E to 7N180 to 2N180 back to 3N175E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
3:30 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
9:50 AM Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
4:06 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
9:37 PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:43 AM	6:20 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	6:20 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM
Sunday	6:42 AM	6:21 PM
Monday	6:41 AM	6:21 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:50 PM	8:19 AM
Friday	9:43 PM	8:59 AM
Saturday	10:36 PM	9:38 AM
Sunday	11:29 PM	10:19 AM
Monday		11:02 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Valentine basketball free throw competition

The first ever basketball free throw competition will be held at the Garapan basketball court. Registration will begin at 2pm and the competition will start at 4pm. Entry fee is $30 and there will be cash prizes for 1st , 2nd and 3rd. For more information, you may contact Dan at 898-7329 or Glenn at 287-4536. ***(PR)***

Autism Society meeting today

The Autism Society of the CNMI will be holding its monthly meeting today, Feb. 12, 2009, at 5:30pm at the NMPASI Conference Room. Information regarding the group and future meetings will be available at this meeting. All families and friends of individuals with autism and autism related spectrum disorders are invited to attend. For additional information, call John at 234-8803/4 or Larrisa at 322-3761 or send an email to as_cnmi@yahoo.com. ***(PR)***

Puengin Inetnon tomorrow

Puengin Inetnon will again be held at the Kagman Community Center's parking lot tomorrow, Feb. 13, 2009. Puengin Inetnon is Kagman's Friday Night Market that will take place every government payday. It will begin at 4:30pm and end at 10pm. There will vendors selling food, drinks, snacks, clothing, and crafts. Puengin Inetnon is a family oriented event. Alcohol will be prohibited from the event. All are welcome. Come attend Puengin Inetnon for some family fun, right here in Kagman. Interested vendors can call Kagman Post Office at 256-POST for applications. ***(PR)***

Kagman Saturday Flea Market

Kagman's Saturday Flea Market will be on Feb. 14, 2009, at the Kagman Community Center's parking lot. It will be held every government payday Saturday. You may only sell your used items. Tents will be provided. No businesses allowed. Interested sellers can call 256-POST for more info. ***(PR)***

SSHS PTA meeting set

To all parents and legal guardians of Saipan Southern High School students: There will be a PTA meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2009, at 6pm in the cafeteria. ***(PR)***

FMI cleanup at Laulau Beach on Sunday

Friends of the Mariana Islands will lead their monthly cleanup of Laulau Beach this Sunday, Feb. 15. The cleanup will start at 8am at the yellow beach pavilion refurbished by American Red Cross last year. FMI will provide bags and gloves. Please bring a friend. ***(PR)***

Cupid's Ball at World Resort

Kagman High School's Yearbook Class '09 presents "Cupid's Ball" on Feb. 21, 2009, Saturday, at the Saipan World Resort, from 6pm to 10pm. Entertainment will be provided by Power 99 DJ Niana Dela Cruz, KHS Mr. & Mrs. Cupid, and a fashion show. Ticket prices, which include a dinner buffet, is $20 in advance and $25 at the door. The event requires formal attire, with a theme of gold, red, and black. Tickets available at the 670 Rock Steady Shop. ***(PR)***

Live fire training at FDM until Friday

The Emergency Management Office, in conjunction with U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, said the U.S. military will be conducting live fire training on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla from Feb. 9 to 13, 7am to 6pm. The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla Training Area on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. Due to the danger imposed by this activity, EMO is strongly advising the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and date indicated. For more information, contact EMO at 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. ***(EMO)***

Marianas High School schedule

Feb. 16 No classes (President's Day)

Feb. 17 No classes (PSS Professional Development)

Feb. 27 Cultural Day, 9am-3pm MHS Campus, Open to the public

For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

Hopwood events

Feb. 13 Awarding ceremony for 1st Semester accomplishments. Parents of our students are welcome to witness the event at 1pm at our stage area. ***(PR)***

MCS garage sale set

The Mount Carmel School PTO will hold a garage sale on Feb. 16, 2009, Monday (President's Day), from 7am to 12pm at the MCS Cafeteria. Slots are available for rent. If you are interested in selling items at this event, contact Carlyn at 664-9022 or 483-9682 or carlynbodig@hotmail.com. ***(PR)***

John Gonzales Live schedule

The public is invited to watch and learn about newsmaking issues on John Gonzales Live on KSPN Channel 2 from 7pm to 8pm. You can participate by text (285-6382), calling (287-4230), or email johngonzales@pticom.com.

Feb. 17, 2009 *LIVE* @ 7-8 pm – Replays 2/22 and 2/23 at 9-10pm. Parents share testimonies on the *Successes and Challenges of Parenting* in celebration of February as Parent Leadership Month

Feb. 18, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 2/22 and 2/23 @ 7-8pm. Students and PSS discuss *Teen HIV & Unintended Pregnancies*

Feb. 25, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 3/1 and 3/2 @ 7-8pm. Farmers & NMC CREES discuss *"Modeling Resource Conservation Techniques through Innovative Farm Practices"*

Mar. 4, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 3/8 and 3/9 @ 7-8pm. NMPASI discusses *"Disability Consumers' Services"* in celebration of March 2009 Disability Awareness Month

Mar. 11, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 3/15 and 3/16 @ 7-8pm. *Retirement Fund Crisis*, NMIRF Board Chair Juan T. Guerrero and Administrator Mark Aguon

Mar. 18, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 3/22 and 3/23 @ 7-8pm. PSS Youth Leaders Advisory Panel (#1)

Mar. 25, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 3/29 and 3/30 @ 7-8pm. PSS Youth Leaders Advisory Panel (#2)

Bank seeks foreclosure of ex-lawmaker's properties

The Bank of Guam has filed a foreclosure complaint against former Rep. Martin B. Ada for allegedly refusing to pay over $153,398 in loan plus interest and late fees.

The bank, through lawyer Robert T. Torres, is suing Ada for breach of contract, and conversion. The bank asked the Superior Court to issue a judgment finding Ada liable to pay $136,915 in principal amount plus interest and late fees.

Torres asked the court to order that the real property consisting of 3,067 square meters of land given by Ada as collateral be sold and the proceeds be applied to the payment.

Torres stated in the complaint that on May 23, 2006, Ada obtained from the bank a mortgage loan of $139,800.

The lawyer said the promissory note is secured by two mortgages on Ada's two lands in San Vicente.

Torres said Ada is in default on the note; his last payment was in July 2008.

"Despite demand from plaintiff, defendant refused and failed and continuously refuses and fails to make his payments," he said.

Torres alleged that Ada has converted the total principal amount of $136,915.81, by "holding it without claim or right and despite demand made by plaintiff for its return."***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

ABE ORIENTATION

CNMI Probation Office director Ursula Lifoifoi-Aldan speaks before students of the Northern Marianas College's Adult Basic Education Program at ABE's orientation held last week Monday. Lifoifoi-Aldan, a GED graduate and also keynote speaker for the evening, offered words of inspiration as she outlined her life's many milestones, which, she saud, "would not have been possible without [her] GED." The program's enrollment recorded an all-time high, with 147 students in the Spring 2009 semester.

NMC

Business

$3 trillion!—Senate, Fed, Treasury attack crisis

WASHINGTON (AP)—On a single day filled with staggering sums, the Obama administration, Federal Reserve and Senate attacked the deepening economic crisis Tuesday with actions that could throw as much as $3 trillion more in government and private funds into the fight against frozen credit markets and rising joblessness.

"It's gone deep. It's gotten worse," President Barack Obama said of the recession at a campaign-style appearance in Ft. Myers, Fla., where unemployment has reached double digits. "The situation we face could not be more serious."

If any more emphasis were needed, Wall Street investors sent stocks plunging, objecting that new rescue details from the government were too sparse despite the huge numbers. The Dow Jones industrials dropped 382 points.

The president spoke shortly after Senate passage of an $838 billion emergency economic stimulus bill cleared the way for talks with the House on a final compromise. In a display of urgency, White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel traveled to the Capitol in mid-afternoon for meetings with Democratic leaders as well as moderate senators whose views—and votes—will be key to any compromise.

Separately, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner outlined plans for spending much of the $350 billion in financial bailout money recently cleared by Congress, and the Federal Reserve announced it would commit up to $1 trillion to make loans more widely available to consumers.

Taken together, the events marked at least a political watershed if not an economic turning point—the day the three-week old administration and its congressional allies assumed full control of the struggle against the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

The vote was 61-37 in the Senate to pass the stimulus, with moderate Republican Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania joining Democrats in support.

Even before the vote, Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi met with Obama at the White House to go over the task ahead.

The Democratic leaders have long pledged to have legislation on Obama's desk by midmonth, and Reid told reporters he hopes for at least a first cut at a deal within 24 hours. "We need to get this done as fast as we can," he declared.

The political urgency bumped up against other obstacles, though.

The House measure includes roughly $70 billion more spending than the Senate's, but it lacks Senate-approved tax breaks totaling more than $100 billion for new car buyers, home purchasers and upper middle income families.

AP

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., talks to reporters after the final passage of the stimulus bill, Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009, at the Capitol in Washington.

Staywell Saipan welcomes Plinske, Hooper

After 16 years of public service as an educator and business development leader at Northern Marianas College, Eric Plinske has joined StayWell Saipan as branch manager. In addition, Chai Hooper has rejoined the StayWell Saipan team as office manager after returning to Saipan from Atlanta, Georgia.

"Eric's educational background, community involvement, and managerial experience will be a great asset for our company. We are excited and fortunate to have Eric join our team," according to Don Davis, president of StayWell. "It's also a blessing to have Chai back after running the StayWell Saipan office for 14 years before moving to the U.S. mainland two years ago."

Plinske moved to Saipan in January 1993 to manage the Small Business Development Center at NMC after having completed his Master of Business Administration degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Plinske also holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Chaminade University, which he earned while serving on active duty in the U.S. Army at Fort Shafter, Hawaii. While at NMC, Plinske went on to become the Business Department chair and taught several courses in Business Administration.

Hooper originally joined StayWell Saipan in March 1993 as a Medical Records Administrator. Prior to joining StayWell in 1993, Hooper was in clinical practice at St. Mary's Hospital in Orange, New Jersey, and Passaic General Hospital in Passaic, New Jersey. Hooper holds a BSN/RN degree from Cebu Doctors' University in Cebu, the Philippines, and a Licensed Practical Nurse certification from New Jersey.

Hooper

Plinske

"Although it is difficult to separate from the college and my close NMC family, I am looking forward to this exciting new opportunity in the private sector with StayWell," said Plinske.

As the co-founder of Gold's Gym Saipan, Plinske is no stranger to the to the health and wellness industry. "I plan to continue promoting the importance of health and fitness while providing the best possible health and dental insurance for the community at StayWell. And one of the most amazing things about StayWell is that we reward our customers with refunds for staying healthy," Plinske said.

As for Hooper, she said: "I'm so glad to be back. I truly missed everyone and of course the sun. My support on health promotion and disease prevention still continues for the well being of not only StayWell members, but also to all individuals in the CNMI."

StayWell has been serving the CNMI residents for more than 20 years, offering excellent and affordable healthcare coverage including medical and dental insurance. ***(PR)***

Hard Rock, Jon Bon Jovi partner to bring 'soul' to signature series

Bon Jovi designs limited-edition T-shirt

ORLANDO, Fla.—Jon Bon Jovi has partnered with Hard Rock International, who recently announced that the iconic rocker has lent an original Bon Jovi design to create the Signature Series: Edition XXVI—a limited-edition T-shirt and pin, which will benefit The Philadelphia Soul Charitable Foundation.

Bon Jovi

Bon Jovi, , who leads the No. 1 touring act in the world, is the most recent artist to become part of Hard Rock's Signature Series T-shirt program, which has helped to raise millions of dollars for charitable causes worldwide.

"Over the years spent building homes and rebuilding communities with the Philadelphia Soul Charitable Foundation, I've seen that people want to contribute to something they believe in," said Bon Jovi. "With Hard Rock as a worldwide partner, the Signature Series lets fans contribute to our future builds."

The Signature Series T-shirt: Edition XXVI features Bon Jovi's signature and original art consisting of Rock and Roll imagery that fans will recognize as authentically Bon Jovi.

Draped with a banner bearing the band's name, the heart pierced by a winged dagger was created by Bon Jovi and is set on a black T-shirt, available in men's and women's sizes. Hard Rock's limited-edition Jon Bon Jovi Signature Series is currently available online at www.hardrock.com/rockshop and at Rock Shops at Hard Rock Cafes, Hotels and Casinos worldwide.

Founded in 2006, the Philadelphia Soul Charitable Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing about positive change and helping the lives of those in need "one soul at a time."

The foundation exists to combat issues that force families and individuals into economic despair with programs and partnerships targeted at breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

As a result of his efforts, Bon Jovi and his foundation were recently honored at the 2008 Billboard Touring Awards with the Humanitarian Award, which recognizes the philanthropic efforts of a touring professional.

"Jon Bon Jovi has been one of the world's most successful and popular artists for more than two decades, and we are proud to have such a celebrated artist and philanthropist become part of Hard Rock's renowned global Signature Series T-shirt program," said Hamish Dodds, president and CEO, Hard Rock International. "We are honored to be able to show our support for his Philadelphia Soul Charitable Foundation and help to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness."

Hundreds of TV stations to end analog on Feb. 17

NEW YORK (AP)—More than a quarter of major U.S. TV stations intend to shut down their analog broadcasts on Feb. 17, sticking to the original date despite the wish of the Obama administration that they wait until June.

Congress last week gave TV stations until June 12 to shut down analog broadcasts, hoping to give viewers more time to prepare. Money has run out for the federal fund that subsidizes converter boxes, and there's a wait list for the coupons.

The delay sent TV stations scrambling to figure out when to shut down analog. Most had planned for years to do it on Feb. 17, and many had scheduled engineering work.

The Federal Communications Commission said Tuesday that 491 of the 1,796 full-power TV stations in the country had registered their intention to keep the Feb. 17 date. The FCC has reserved the right to deny individual stations an early shutdown.

San Diego will be the largest city to lose analog broadcasts of three networks: CBS, ABC and Fox.

Smaller cities losing most or all of their major analog network broadcasts include Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Okla.; Charleston and Greenville, S.C.; Dayton, Ohio; Springfield, Ill.; Burlington, Vt.; Bakersfield, Calif.; Binghamton, N.Y.; Casper, Wyo.; Lincoln, Neb.; Lubbock, Texas; Mobile, Ala.; and Sioux Falls, S.D.

The major broadcast networks, which own 85 stations mainly in large cities, have committed to the June 12 date. Stations in smaller markets are more likely to feel the added economic burden of keeping analog broadcasts for another four months.

The transition to digital TV is being mandated because digital signals are more efficient than analog ones. Ending analog broadcasts will free up valuable space in the nation's airwaves for commercial wireless services and emergency-response networks.

The FCC said 190 stations have already turned off their analog signals. All stations on Hawaii made the transition in January due to environmental issues.

TVs connected to cable or satellite services are not affected by the analog shutdown. According to research firm MRI, 17.7 percent of Americans live in households with only over-the-air TV.

Most of them are ready for the analog shutdown, according to the National Association of Broadcasters. Analysts at the Nielsen Co. Nielsen said Thursday that more than 5.8 million U.S. households, or 5.1 percent of all homes, are not ready.

Nation

Tornado kills at least 4 in southern Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—A large, violent tornado ripped through a southern Oklahoma town late Tuesday evening, killing four people and injuring up to 50, authorities said. Severe weather also caused damage and power outages in metro Oklahoma City and western Texas.

At least four people were killed and between 20 and 50 were injured by the tornado in Lone Grove, the state Department of Emergency Management said. The town of about 4,600 people is about 100 miles south of Oklahoma City.

Damage in the town was extensive and ambulances and other first responders from communities near Lone Grove were heading there, said Amber Wilson, the emergency management director for nearby Ardmore.

"Basically, all we have, it is pretty bad," said Chester Agan, assistant emergency manager for Carter County.

The National Weather Service said the tornado that hit Lone Grove was large and violent. At least two other twisters were confirmed, including one that damaged buildings in Oklahoma City and the northern suburb of Edmond.

At an Edmond business park, a body shop and the vehicles inside had been turned into a twisted ball of metal.

Shop manager Michael Jerry said he went home to eat and watch the weather reports as the storm moved into the area.

"It's just surreal," Jerry said. "You just don't believe it. Especially knowing you were just there minutes before. The steel girders are in a ball."

In northwest Oklahoma City, one wall of a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant collapsed, windows were blown out, and a piece of its awning was thrown into a tree. Signs were stripped and cars were damaged in the parking lot.

At the nearby Boulder Ridge Apartments, a large section of roof was blown off one building and part of a wall was blown off another. Parked cars were shifted by the wind and smashed into each other.

In between downpours of rain, residents wandered out to snap pictures of the wreckage or clear debris.

"My kids are still in the closet and won't come out," said Traci Keil, 37, as more rain started.

Oklahoma Gas and Electric had 28,500 customers that lost power, mostly in the Oklahoma City area, according to its Web site. Eighteen power poles were snapped.

The Oklahoma County Election Board was preparing to tally votes for a school board election when power went out.

Election materials will be locked up overnight and workers will start counting ballots Wednesday, board secretary Doug Sanderson said.

Clinton holds out hope for useful talks with Iran

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. and Iran have a chance to "work out a way of talking" that could lead to understandings on a range of issues, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Tuesday.

In a hopeful assessment of prospects for improved relations with Tehran, Clinton told reporters at the State Department that the U.S. remains opposed to Iran getting nuclear weapons. She added that the Obama administration hopes the two nations can work out "a better understanding of one another."

During an appearance with her Czech counterpart, Karel Schwarzenberg, Clinton was asked about Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statement that Iran would welcome talks with Washington if they are based on mutual respect.

Clinton

Iran and the U.S. have not had diplomatic relations for nearly 30 years.

"There is an opportunity for the Iranian government to demonstrate a willingness to unclench their fist and to begin a serious and responsible discussion about a range of matters," Clinton said.

"We still persist in our view that Iran should not obtain nuclear weapons, that it would be a very unfortunate course for them to pursue, and we hope there will be opportunities in the future for us to develop a better understanding of one another and to work out a way of talking that would produce positive results for the people of Iran."

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a news conference that he would encourage the Obama administration to start talking to Iran as soon as possible to try to resolve the nuclear issue.

Clinton said the prospect of Iran obtaining ballistic missiles capable of striking central and western Europe was the driving force behind U.S. efforts in recent years to extend its missile defense system to Europe. She did not say whether the Obama administration would go ahead with plans laid by the Bush administration to install missile interceptors in Poland and a missile-tracking radar in the Czech Republic.

Clinton said that if Iran were to change course on the development of missiles and nuclear weapons, then the U.S. "will reconsider where we stand," on the missile defense issue. "But we are a long, long way from seeing any evidence of a behavior change."

Slain Florida girl Caylee Anthony remembered

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The grandmother of slain Florida toddler Caylee Anthony told hundreds of mourners Tuesday that her granddaughter was able to win the love of strangers and inspired them to come together for a common purpose.

"Caylee Marie has taught some to love a child whom they've never met," Cindy Anthony said during her granddaughter's memorial service at the First Baptist Church of Orlando. "Caylee Marie has brought thousands of strangers from all religious backgrounds in one church to pray."

The service came two months after the girl's remains were found in swampy woods near her grandparents' home where she lived with her mother, who has been charged in her death. Before the discovery, hundreds of volunteers—most of whom had no personal connection with the girl—had helped search for her after she was reported missing over the summer.

"It shouldn't take the death of a child to love our God and our fellow man," Cindy Anthony said.

First Baptist Pastor David Uth remembered Caylee, saying this was one of those days "you don't know what to say." And he offered a "prayer of peace" for her mother, Casey Anthony, who was jailed less than a mile away on a first-degree murder charge. She has pleaded not guilty and claims a baby sitter kidnapped Caylee.

Casey Anthony could have asked for permission to watch the memorial broadcast live on TV but didn't, according to jail officials. The 22-year-old said in a statement read by her attorney that she missed Caylee "every day and every minute of every day."

ACROSS THE NATION

Mayor: Obama should apologize for Vegas trips quip

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Sin City's mayor wants President Barack Obama to apologize for saying companies shouldn't visit Las Vegas on the taxpayer's dime. Oscar Goodman spoke after a regular scheduled meeting with tourism officials where he expressed concern that federal lawmakers might be discouraging travel to the city. "What's a better place, as I say, than for them to come here," Goodman told KLAS-TV. "And to change their mind and to go someplace else and to cancel—and at the suggestion of the president of the United States—that's outrageous." Obama made the remarks Monday during a town hall meeting in Elkhart, Ind., where the president traveled to muster public support for economic stimulus legislation. "You can't get corporate jets, you can't go take a trip to Las Vegas or go down to the Super Bowl on the taxpayer's dime," Obama said. A White House spokesman said it was looking into the mayor's comments and did not have immediate comment.

Lab tests show possible salmonella at Texas plant

ATLANTA (AP)—Private lab tests show there may have been salmonella at a second plant operated by the peanut company at the center of a national outbreak, but the potentially tainted products were not sent to consumers, Texas health officials said Tuesday. The Peanut Corp. of America plant in Plainview, Texas, had operated unlicensed and uninspected for nearly four years, heightening food safety concerns already swirling around the company. Although no recalls related to the plant were announced Tuesday, federal inspectors have begun looking for any signs of problems similar to those found at company plant in Georgia identified as the source of the salmonella outbreak. Peanut Corp. temporarily closed the Texas plant Monday night at the request of health officials after tests found "the possible presence of salmonella" in some of its products, the Texas Department of Health said.

African-American Pullman porters honored

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—In an era when America traveled by train, one of the best jobs an African-American man could land was working as a Pullman porter. It also was one of the worst. The hours were grueling—16 hours a day, seven days a week. The pay was poor and the work menial at best. Porters cleaned toilets, made beds and satisfied the whims of passengers who sometimes called them "boy" or worse. Still, Pullman porters saw the country, met famous people and supported families. On Tuesday, Amtrak honored the legacy of Pullman porters, who formed the first black labor union in the country in 1925. "It was a wonderful life," recalled 98-year-old Lee Gibson, who traveled from Los Angeles to join four other members of The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The group bashfully accepted awards at the Oakland Amtrak station, thanked their proud families and shared memories. Similar gatherings were held in Chicago and Washington last year.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB09-OHS-053

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 10, 2009 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A DIESEL GENERATOR INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF A GENERATOR HOUSE FOR THE CNMI OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY BUILDING #1326, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A MANDATORY PRE-BID CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED FOR **9:30 A.M., LOCAL TIME, MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2009** AT THE OFFICE OF HOME AND SECURITY BUILDING #1326, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN. **ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING** THIS PROJECT MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY OR FAXED TO (670) 664-2218 NO LATER THAN THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009.**

LOCAL BIDDERS PREFERENCE IS **NOT AVAILABLE** TO LOCAL BIDDERS BECAUSE THE FEDERAL GRANTOR AGENCY, THE U.S. OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY, HAS CERTIFIED THAT SUCH PREFERENCE IS IN CONFLICT WITH THE AGENCY'S GRANT CONDITIONS.

/s/ **PATRICK J. TENORIO**
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR
HOMELAND SECURITY

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS
RFQ09-DLNR-041

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2009 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE SMILING COVE MARINA REHABILITATION PROJECT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE DLNR-DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE SMILING COVE MARINA OFFICE, AT SMILING COVE. **A NON-REFUNDABLE PAYMENT OF FIFTY DOLLARS (US$50.00) IS REQUIRED FOR A COPY. PAYMENT MUST BE MADE TO THE CNMI TREASURER.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFQ MUST ME SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO DR. IGNACIO T. dela CRUZ D.V.M., SECRETARY OF DLNR, LOWER BASE DRIVE, SAIPAN OR FAXED TO (670) 322-2633 NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME FEBRUARY 18, 2009.**

/s/ **DR. IGNACIO T. dela CRUZ, D.V.M**
SECRETARY OF DLNR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-048

SUBMISSION: MARCH 03, 2009 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"OUTSIDE GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MR. TOMAS S. PALACIOS, MANAGER OF GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES** BY FAX TO (670) 234-8930 OR E-MAILED TO tspalacios@gmail.com NO LATER THAN **FEBRUARY 19, 2009 CLOSE OFBUSINESS.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERECED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
Secretary of Health

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-SOF-051

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 27, 2009 • TIME: 3:30 P.M.

"TO LEASE / DEVELOP / REVITALIZE LA FIESTA PROPERTY"

The Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Secretary of Finance, is soliciting proposals from interested individuals, businesses, investors and project developers, for the lease, redevelopment and revitalization of the La Fiesta Property, including upgrading and renovating all existing facilities, within the commercial complex across from Palms Resort in San Roque, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A copy of the specification may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply in Lower Base, Saipan during regular working hours. Preference is available to U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the proposal if preference is claimed.

For information regarding the technical description of the La Fiesta Property, including existing leases on the property, please contact the Secretary of Finance at (670) 664-1100 or write to P.O. Box 5234, CHRB, Saipan MP 96950.

/s/ **ELOY S. INOS**
Secretary of Finance

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

Asia

Koala rescued from Australia's wildfire wasteland

AP

Local CFA firefighter David Tree shares his water with an injured Australian Koala at Mirboo North after wildfires swept through the region on Monday, Feb. 9, 2009.

SYDNEY (AP)—It was a chance encounter in the charred landscape of Australia's deadly wildfires: A koala sips water from a bottle offered by a firefighter. David Tree noticed the koala moving gingerly on scorched paws as his fire patrol passed. Clearly in pain, the animal stopped when it saw Tree.

"It was amazing, he turned around, sat on his bum and sort of looked at me with (a look) like, put me out of my misery," Tree told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "I yelled out for a bottle of water. I unscrewed the bottle, tipped it up on his lips and he just took it naturally.

"He kept reaching for the bottle, almost like a baby."

The team called animal welfare officers to pick up the koala Sunday, the day after deadly firestorms swept southern Victoria state.

"I love nature, and I've handled koalas before. They're not the friendliest things, but I wanted to help him," Tree said.

Often mistakenly called koala bears because they resemble a child's teddy bear, the marsupial is actually a rather grumpy creature with a loud growl and sharp claws. It rarely comes down from the trees and doesn't like walking.

Taiwan's Wu pleads guilty to laundering $2.2M

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's former first lady admitted to laundering $2.2 million and forging documents Tuesday—the latest in a judicial process that has seen her husband stage a jailhouse hunger strike, her daughter lash out at media, and her son plead guilty to similar charges.

Wu Shu-bian, who arrived in her wheelchair looking wan in an orange Burberry jacket and light gray trousers, told a three-judge panel that she sent abroad $2.2 million she received from a contractor in connection with a government construction project and that she forged documents related to a special presidential fund.

However, she did not admit to charges of embezzling money from the fund and other charges of taking bribes in connection with a land deal and the government construction project. She did not say whether the money was a bribe—as prosecutors allege—or a political donation as she has repeatedly suggested.

The case against Wu is part of a complex web of charges that has also ensnared her husband, former President Chen Shui-bian, as well as her son, daughter-in-law and brother.

Wu's appearance was her first at the court since proceedings against her began in December 2006. She fainted early on in that session and was rushed to a Taipei hospital.

ASIAN BRIEFS

China report: 76 sentenced so far for Tibet riots

BEIJING (AP)—China has sentenced 76 people and detained more than 950 others since last year's deadly anti-government riots in Tibet, state media said Wednesday. The report by the official Xinhua News Agency attributed the latest figures to Nyima Tsering, a Tibetan Communist Party official, but did not elaborate on what the sentences were, what charges they faced, or what happened to those detained. The latest figures, however, indicate the legal process is ongoing. Authorities said in November that 55 people had been sentenced. The government has released few details of the aftermath of the March 14 violence, the largest uprising against Chinese rule in nearly 50 years. Beijing says 22 people died, but Tibetan supporters say many times that number were killed in the protests and subsequent military crackdown.

Sri Lanka: 16 patients killed in hospital shelling

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—At least 16 patients being treated at a makeshift hospital in the northern Sri Lankan war zone were killed by shelling, the Red Cross said Tuesday, as the military accused rebel fighters of killing 19 other civilians fleeing the area. The United Nations, meanwhile, said it was outraged by the "unnecessary" deaths of hundreds of people inside rebel territory and urged both sides to avoid fighting in civilian areas. The government accuses the Tamil Tiger rebels of holding civilians hostage in the war zone to use as human shields against the military's offensive. The rebels deny the accusation. International human rights groups say more than 200,000 civilians are believed trapped in the patch of territory still under rebel control.

UN chief says envoy had good talks in Myanmar

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Tuesday his envoy to Myanmar had good talks in the military-ruled Southeast Asian country, and the world body's chief again urged the government and opposition to quickly resume talks. Ban said at a news conference that he looks forward to building on special envoy Ibrahim Gambari's recent visit "with a view to further promoting national dialogue and reconciliation." Gambari met with Myanmar's prime minister, Gen. Thein Sein, as well as detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a four-day trip that ended earlier this month. But he did not meet with the junta's chief, Senior Gen. Than Shwe, as he did on three previous visits. Gambari "had good discussions there even though one may not be totally satisfied," Ban said.

World

Netanyahu, Livni declare win in Israeli election

JERUSALEM (AP)—Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and hard-line rival Benjamin Netanyahu both claimed victory Tuesday in Israel's parliamentary election, but official results showed a race so close it could be decided by a third candidate—a rising power among the hawks.

Right-wing parties—including Netanyahu's Likud Party—appear to have won a clear majority of 65 seats in the 120-seat parliament, which would give Netanyahu the upper hand in forming the next government.

However, with 99 percent of the votes counted, Livni's centrist Kadima Party had 28 seats, while Likud had 27. Those results could change by a seat or two—enough to alter the outcome—when soldiers' votes are tallied Thursday evening.

The winner of the election wasn't clear in part because Livni could try to form a coalition with hawkish parties. It appeared ultranationalist Avigdor Lieberman, who based his campaign on denying citizenship to Israeli Arabs he considers disloyal, could single-handedly determine the country's next leader with his decision of whom to join.

He declared after the vote that he spoken to both Livni and Netanyahu and told them he could be persuaded to join either one, but he added that he wanted a "nationalist right-wing government."

Netanyahu

Livni

Whoever comes out on top, the political wrangling was likely to drag on for weeks, and with it the fate of international Mideast peace efforts.

A win by Livni, who favors giving up land to make room for a Palestinian state, would boost President Barack Obama's goal of pursuing an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

A government led by Netanyahu, who opposes concessions to the Palestinians, could put Israel and the U.S. on a collision course. Netanyahu says he would allow West Bank settlements to expand and is seen as likely to contemplate military action against Iran.

"With God's help, I will lead the next government," Netanyahu told a raucous crowd of cheering supporters chanting his nickname, Bibi. "The national camp, led by the Likud, has won a clear advantage."

Soon after, Livni took the stage before a crowd of flag-waving supporters and flashed a V for victory sign. "Today the people chose Kadima. ... We will form the next government led by Kadima."

Iranian president says talks with US possible

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's hard-line president told crowds celebrating the Islamic revolution's anniversary Tuesday that the country is ready for talks with the United States, the strongest signal yet that Tehran welcomes President Barack Obama's calls for dialogue.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made the comments in a speech to hundreds of thousands celebrating the 30th anniversary of the revolution, which ousted the U.S-backed shah and installed rule by hard-line Muslim clerics. The event led to a collapse in relations between the two countries and years of enmity.

As usual at such gatherings, there were chants of "Death to America," along with the burning of U.S. and Israeli flags. But the chanting stopped as Ahmadinejad spoke of dialogue with the United States, and the firebrand president refrained from the denunciations of America that often mark his speeches.

RELATED NEWS

Clinton holds out hope for useful talks with Iran.

PAGE 15

Since Obama's election, Iranian leaders have struck a cautious tone over his campaign promises to open a dialogue with Tehran, signaling that the government was undecided on how to respond. On Tuesday, Ahmadinejad made it clear Iran is prepared to talk, citing terrorism, the elimination of nuclear weapons, restructuring the U.N. Security Council and fighting drug trafficking as possible areas for discussion.

"The Iranian nation is ready for talks (with the U.S.), but in a fair atmosphere with mutual respect," Ahmadinejad told the crowds in Tehran's Freedom Square.

WORLD BRIEFS

S. Africa plans to step up its AIDS battle

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—South Africa's health minister on Tuesday promised a dramatic increase in treatment for AIDS victims to overcome the legacy of a decade of governmental denial of the epidemic. Barbara Hogan said the government wanted to provide AIDS drugs to 1.5 million people over the next three years—up from 700,000 at present, conceding that thousands were without the treatment they desperately need. South Africa has an estimated 5.7 million people infected with HIV—the most of any country in the world—and nearly 1,000 people die every day of AIDS-related diseases. But former President Thabo Mbeki and his health minister downplayed the crisis. When Hogan was appointed in September, she immediately broke with the discredited policies of her predecessor who promoted garlic and lemons rather than conventional AIDS drugs.

Sarkozy moves to restore ties with Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP)—President Nicolas Sarkozy paid the first visit to Iraq by a French head of state Tuesday, smoothing over lingering resentment about France's opposition to the war and positioning his country to cash in on lucrative arms and oil deals. The one-day visit, part of a Persian Gulf tour, took place as the Obama administration is preparing to draw down the 144,000-strong U.S. military force and signaled France's intention to play a diplomatic role in a region dominated by the United States. "I want to underscore France's desire to participate in the economic development of Iraq, the rehabilitation of its infrastructures," Sarkozy told reporters after meeting Iraqi President Jalal Talabani. "Our collaboration has no limits."

Prosecutor: Urine injection kills Bolivian woman

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP)—A Bolivian woman has died from an injection of urine allegedly administered by her friend as a form of health therapy, a prosecutor said Tuesday. Investigating prosecutor Oscar Flores told The Associated Press that 35-year-old Gabriela Ascarrunz died Saturday of an "infection caused by urine that was injected by fashion designer Monica Schultz." Local newspapers reported that Schultz, who is known across Bolivia for her clothing lines, is a practitioner of urine therapy—a form of alternative medicine using human urine for cosmetic purposes or to treat various diseases. Some people rub it on their skin, while others inject or drink it. Skeptical scientists and physicians say there is no evidence urine treatment works and that chemicals it contains could potentially be toxic. An arrest order was issued for Schultz.

Environment

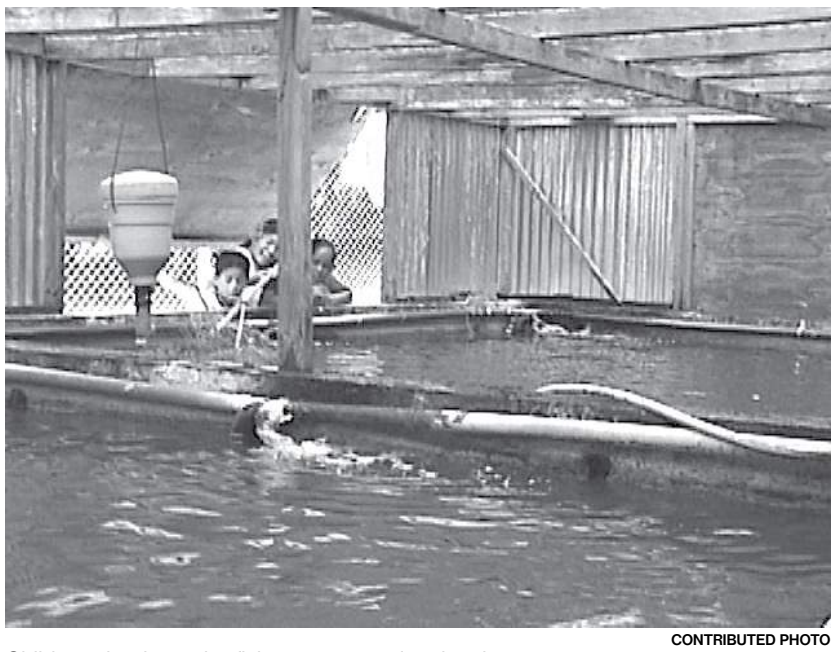
Aquaculture, science, and self-reliance

Editor's Note: The following article was written by Project Manager Valrick Welch for the Aquaculture, Science, and Self-Reliance Project management team at the San Vicente Elementary School.

The outreach manager, hydroponics manager, and project manager would like to thank the *Saipan Tribune* for allowing us to use this space to share our project with you, the readers of this paper. The person responsible for collecting the student research information, anecdotal stories, and other related information to be presented in this section is the Outreach Manager, Pete Arriola. Not only is Arriola an overall great guy, he is the Saipan pioneer for aquaculture, as he was the first person to build a home aquaculture tank on Saipan. When he was introduced to aquaculture by the college, he went all out and made a system to the best design the college had at the time. His children were also involved with his project and enjoyed catching the fish as well as eating them. During a San Vicente Elementary School fundraising carnival, his children caught fish from their tank that were later put in a temporary tank at the carnival. Children at the carnival bought tickets to catch fish that they later took home to eat. It was at this carnival that San Vicente students, teachers, staff, and parents were first introduced to aquaculture. This later led to the SVES project.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Outreach Manager Pete Arriola, who pioneered home aquaculture on Saipan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Children check out the fish on an operational tank.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Boy Scouts work on repainting the damaged tank.

A brief history of the Aquaculture Science Project

Purpose: To provide exciting and relevant learning experiences for San Vicente Elementary School students. The Aquaculture Science Project began in1999 from grant money donated by the National Science Foundation, Christa McAuliffe Fellowship money, and a donation from the Bank of Hawaii. For four years this project was used to teach lessons related to life science.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The damaged tilapia tanks.

Activities included students' observations of the Tilapia life cycle and fish dissections. During the dissections, students would observe the heart beating. After dissecting the fish, the students would cook and eat it, along with the vegetables growing in the fish filter.

Other activities included:

1. Making video projects of students feeding the tilapia and catching them with nets.

2. Students fundraising through tilapia sales, as well as selling plate lunches cooked by students.

3. After-school science activities that involved students taking fingerlings home to raise and observe.

4. One group of science students took an off-island trip to Guam to make a presentation at the PREL conference about the Aquaculture Science Project. The trip was subsidized by Tilapia sales.

5. A science fair project had students catching and cooking tilapia for the parents. Also included in the menu was kangkun (watercress) that was grown in the tilapia filter.

The project was stopped after the tanks were damaged by two typhoons. FEMA provided replacement wood and tin and the Boy Scouts from Troop 913 removed the damaged material and painted the tanks. However, due to a lack of funding the pumps were not replaced and renovations required to make the area safe for student learning were not made.

Now, thanks to a grant from the Administration for Native Americans, as well as numerous partnering agencies, this project is being restarted. It is also being improved with the addition of off-campus farms, and at least two high tech plant-growing systems. The project is also partnering with the Native Medical Association to assist in preserving endangered native plants, and to learn the culture of the native medicine men and women.

In the following articles we look forward to sharing our experience and knowledge gained from this project. In particular we hope that many of you will become interested in starting your own aquaculture farms and/ or small gardens. Arriola is looking forward to providing information and lists of resources for community members interested in starting their own projects.

Video shows green practices to manage stormwater runoff

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Botanic Garden produced an on-line video, *"Reduce Runoff: Slow It Down, Spread It Out, Soak It In,"* that highlights green techniques such as rain gardens, green roofs and rain barrels to help manage stormwater runoff.

ON THE NET

More information on stormwater management: http://www.epa.gov/greeninfrastracture

The film showcases green techniques that are being used in urban areas to reduce the effects of stormwater runoff on the quality of downstream receiving waters. The goal is to mimic the natural way water moves through an area before development by using design techniques that infiltrate, evaporate, and reuse runoff close to its source.

The techniques are innovative stormwater management practices that manage urban stormwater runoff at its source, and are very effective at reducing the volume of stormwater runoff and capturing harmful pollutants. Using vegetated areas that capture runoff also improves air quality, mitigates the effects of urban heat islands and reduces a community's overall carbon footprint.

The video highlights green techniques on display in 2008 at the U.S. Botanic Garden's "One Planet – Ours!" Exhibit" and at the U.S. EPA in Washington, D.C., including recently completed cisterns.

To watch the video: http://www.epa.gov/nps/lid/. ***(EPA)***

Life & Style

SI cover girl Refaeli nudges her swimsuit south

The world knows a lot more about Bar Refaeli today than it did yesterday, including where her tiny tan line falls. Sports Illustrated Swimsuit unveiled the 23-year-old Israeli, who has been romantically linked to Leonardo DiCaprio, as a first-time cover girl on Tuesday.

This gig, more than top fashion or entertainment magazines, can be career-altering as it puts a model's face (not to mention, her fantastically toned body) in front of millions of eyeballs, appealing to both men and women, sports fans and fashionistas.

It's the cover that matters most, says SI group editor Terry McDonell, but each model—19 for this issue—gets an equal shot at the cover. Refaeli wears a string bikini by Missoni—and the strings on the bikini bottom are being tugged south.

"The cover has to reflect the athleticism and sexiness of the culture. This photo is modern, her hair and swimsuit look natural. You see her freckles. Her body is amazing and she looks intelligent," McDonell said.

It's also purposeful, he noted, that the models have healthy, sometimes curvy, figures. "A skinny waif won't work here." McDonell, along with Swimsuit editor Diane Smith and SI creative director Steve Hoffman, sifted through 90,000 photos this year. In consumer testing, it's inevitable that the raciest one is the favorite, but that's not the one that lands on the front. "There are marketplace considerations," McDonell explained. "I want to be at the front of the store, not the back."

Refaeli told The Associated Press that she had the feeling that this particular shot of her in the water on Canouan Island in the Grenadines was her chance to be on the front.

"This is the one I felt the most comfortable with," said Refaeli, who twice before was featured on the inside pages of the magazine. "You have the beach, blue water and a body. That's it. I liked that the top of the suit was on."

You can be sexy without revealing too much skin, said veteran supermodel Cheryl Tiegs, who first appeared on the Swimsuit issue cover in 1970—and then again in 1975 and 1983.

That shot happened at the end of a full day shooting in Hawaii, and she was cold. Someone gave her long-sleeve top to warm her up and when the photographer asked her to take it off, Tiegs refused—and she wouldn't take off her sunglasses either, she recalled. That photo, she said, really captured a moment, though.

"I remember walking by the newsstand and seeing I was on the cover and picking up a copy or two. That was the celebration then. ... But I'm still signing covers for fans," Tiegs said.

SI's swimsuit issue began in 1964, when February marked the low point of the sports seasons. The NFL ended in December, there were no national televised hockey games and the NBA had only a half-dozen teams. After putting safe-driving tips and dog shows on the cover, SI decided to put an attractive female on the cover and call it a "skin-diving story," recalls Smith.

It was popular from the start, but Smith thinks it was Tiegs' cover that made it a phenomenon. However, it was Kathy Ireland in a white strapless bikini in 1989 that remains the best-selling cover.

"I've done many, many, many different covers in the fashion world ... but never had as big a splash as Sports Illustrated," said Heidi Klum, the cover model in 1998. "I went to '(The Tonight Show with Jay) Leno,' the morning shows in New York and LA—it was a huge thing—suddenly I became a household name," she said.

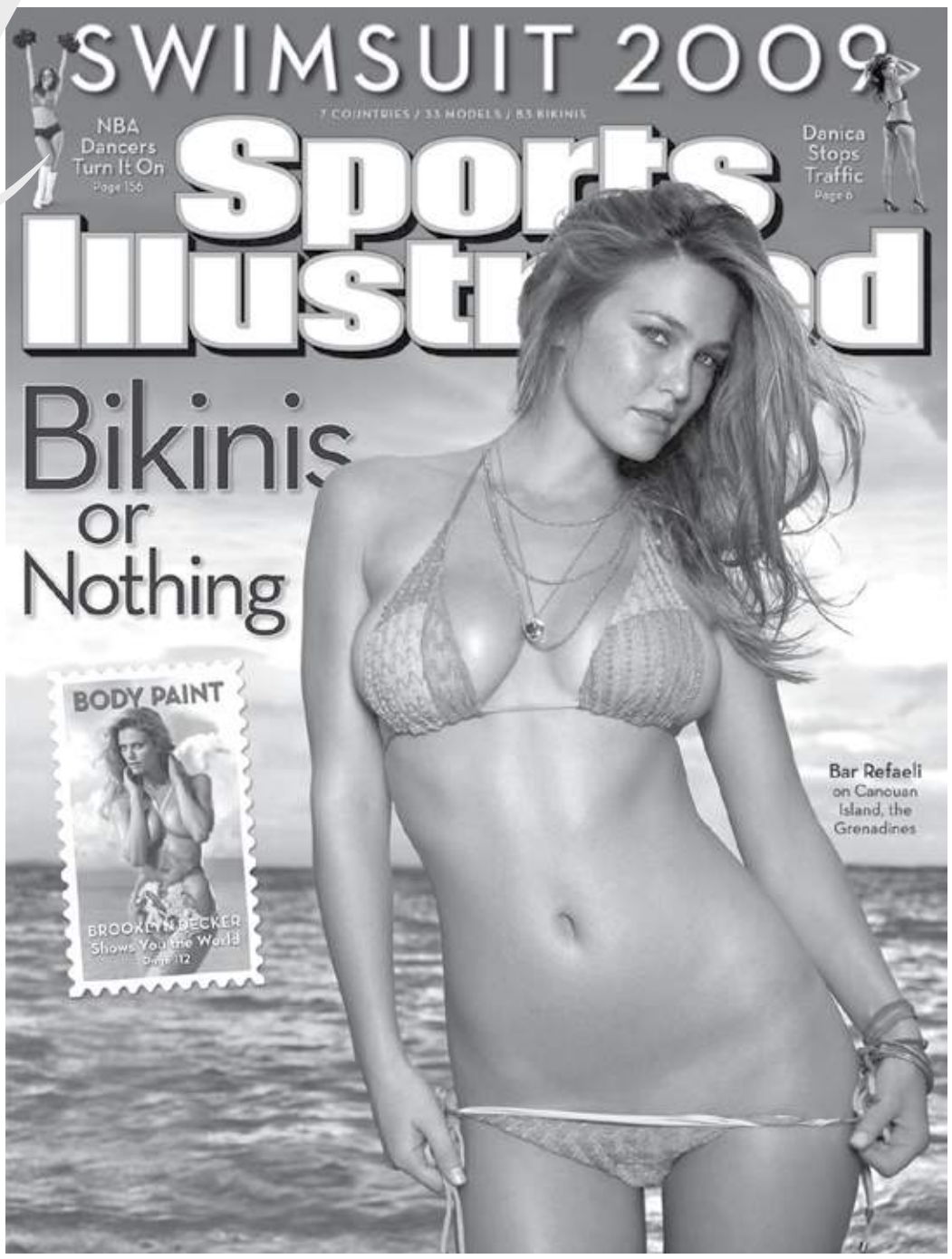
But more than the fame, Klum said she appreciates from SI the professionalism shown to a relatively untested model wearing next to nothing. "I had wanted it to be so good. I'd arch so hard ... but they'd say, 'Look sexy with your eyes. Don't overpose. Be yourself and have fun.'"

There's a balance between wholesome and sexy the editors are always straddling, without ever being sleazy, Hoffman said.

The magazine spends an average of three days shooting each model, each with an average wake-up call of 4:30 a.m. because the light is best at dawn, and have about 10,000 bathing suits to choose from.

And even with the outfits so small, SI spends an average of $2,000 in overweight baggage fees per location.

"The logistics are horrifying ... but the Swimsuit issue is probably the healthiest of all the Sports Illustrated franchises, and it's good to be with things that work, especially these days," said McDonell. ***(AP)***



AP

This undated image released by Sports Illustrated/Raphael Mazzucco, shows model Bar Refaeli on the cover of the Feb. 14, 2009 issue of Sports Illustrated Swimsuit, on sale now.

Press corps in DC more specialized, international

NEW YORK (AP)—The Washington press corps at the dawn of the Obama administration is far more specialized and less interested in reaching average Americans than it was just a few years ago.

The capital also has many more foreign reporters covering the U.S. from an outsider's perspective—to the point where the Arab news channel Al-Jazeera have nearly the same number of accredited journalists as CBS News, a report issued Tuesday said.

The Project For Excellence in Journalism documented a press corps that is markedly different from what it was just a few years ago.

Cutbacks at newspapers, magazines and TV networks have sharply reduced the number of reporters watching Washington for general interest publications.

Since the 1980s, the number of newspapers accredited to cover Congress has dropped by two-thirds, the report said. Time and Newsweek have less than half the staff in Washington than they did in the 1980s. BusinessWeek's Washington staff went from 20 to three in just three years.

The Long Island newspaper Newsday had 15 people in Washington when President George W. Bush took office in 2001; now it has one correspondent. The Los Angeles Times had 54 people in Washington in 2004. Now it shares 35 staff members with the Chicago Tribune, The (Baltimore) Sun, The Hartford Courant, the report said. Many smaller papers have gotten rid of their Washington presence altogether.

TV networks have also retrenched, though not as dramatically.

The result is a press corps far less likely to cover state delegations, for example, or report about how Washington's actions affect communities across the country, said Tom Rosenstiel, the project's director.

"The watchdog role that the general interest press has played has clearly shrunk," he said. "What has risen in its place is something that's geared to special interests. It's not the same thing as journalism aimed at citizens."

Specialized publications are thriving, many with journalists let go by newspapers or magazines. They include publications like ClimateWire, Energy Trader, Traffic World, Government Executive and Food Chemical News. They all cover a narrow slice of Washington for interested lobbyists or industry executives who can afford them. Started less than a year ago, the online ClimateWire has twice the reporters as the Hearst News Service and is available for a yearly subscription of $3,495, the report said.

No mainstream media organization lists the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a full-time beat. Inside NRC, a biweekly newsletter that covers the nuclear power industry, costs $2,495 a year.

"What we found striking is that even the journalists who are part of the transition worry about it," Rosenstiel said.

The change makes news services like The Associated Press significantly more influential, he said. It's also made for plenty of business opportunities, like the rapidly growing Politico Web site. Creative news executives may find more: Newspapers in some states may have cut back on reporters, for example, but may be able to make money by selling a specialized service devoted to their interests.

Decades ago, many countries overseas learned about what was going on in Washington from the perspective of U.S. news organizations. Not anymore. When the Foreign Press Center opened in 1968 for non-U.S. media outlets, there were about 160 foreign correspondents. Now there are nearly 10 times as many, the report said.

Technological advances have helped usher more reporters in, and there was a rush of interest after the 2001 terrorist attacks and the Bush administration's response, the report said. An influx of media members from Asia, the Middle East and Africa has been pronounced in recent years.

Now, TV networks like al-Arabiya not only give viewers an alternative view of what's going on in Iraq, they give a different view of what's happening in Washington, the report said.

For example, when former Vice President Dick Cheney commented on the Obama administration's new policies for the Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba, it was a minor story in the U.S., but it was big overseas, Rosenstiel said.

The changing face of the press corps means that "governing is that much more complicated for people in power," he said.

'La Cage' impersonators revue closes in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The final curtain has fallen on the long-running Las Vegas female impersonators revue "An Evening at La Cage."

Headliner Frank Marino and the rest of the cast were informed after Monday's performance that the show was closing immediately, ending a nearly 24-year run.

Producer Norbert Aleman says that he is negotiating for a TV show and hopes to reopen the show that features Marino as Joan Rivers.

Riviera Hotel & Casino President Robert Vannucci says he "understands the economic pressures forcing the situation" and says the hotel hopes to announce a new show soon.

"La Cage" opened in September 1985 and became the fourth longest-running show on the Las Vegas Strip.

The Tropicana's topless revue, "Les Folies Bergere" announced last month that it was closing March 28 after 49 years to make room for an undisclosed new production.

DA asks police for more investigation of Brown

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors said Tuesday they want more evidence from police before determining whether to press charges against Chris Brown, who's accused in a domestic dispute that reportedly involves pop superstar Rihanna.

Police presented a case regarding Brown on Tuesday, but did not release any of its details, Los Angeles County District Attorney spokeswoman Jane Robison said. She said the office would have no further comment on the case.

Brown was arrested Sunday night after surrendering to police, who sought the 19-year-old singer when a woman identified him as he attacker during a fight the night before. Numerous media outlets, citing sources and police officials who were not named, have identified the woman as 20-year-old Rihanna, Brown's longtime girlfriend.

Though an initial police news release indicated that they were investigating a battery on a woman who was injured, Brown was booked only on suspicion of making a criminal threat, a felony. Police have said that prosecutors would determine what charges, if any, were warranted.

The district attorney's kicking the case back to police could signal that prosecutors are seeking to build stronger charges against Brown; or it could mean the current evidence is too flimsy or has holes that would drop it to a misdemeanor or make it go away altogether, Loyola University law professor Stan Goldman said.

"Sending it back certainly isn't the death penalty," Goldman said.

"If you're Chris Brown," he added, "it's both bad and good."

A police spokeswoman said the department had no comment about the district attorney's decision.

The department has said it was alerted to the incident in the upscale Hancock Park neighborhood by a 911 call, but have provided few official details beyond the initial report. Brown's attorney and spokesman have not returned multiple calls and e-mails seeking comment since Sunday.

Brown remains free on $50,000 bail.

The allegations have at least momentarily tarnished Brown's squeaky-clean image. At least one major sponsor, Wrigley, has suspended ad campaigns featuring the singer, who has scored with hits such as 2005's "Run It!" and a Grammy-nominated duet with Jordin Sparks, "No Air."

Brown has withdrawn from public appearances in Phoenix scheduled for this weekend before the NBA All-Star game. Rihanna on Tuesday postponed a planned concert in Malaysia.

Brown and Rihanna, whose real name is Robyn Rihanna Fenty, skipped planned performances at Sunday's Grammy Awards, leaving fellow recording artists to try to make sense of the allegations.

Kanye West, who toured with Rihanna, said on Ryan Seacrest's morning radio show Tuesday morning that the reports of abuse were "devastating."

"I feel like, just as a person, I don't care how famous she is or even if she just worked at McDonald's, that should never happen," West said on the show, which is broadcast on KIIS-FM in Los Angeles. "It should never come to that place."

AP

In this Feb. 7, 2009 file photo, Chris Brown arrives at the Clive Davis pre-Grammy party in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP

In this photo released by CBS, U.S. Airways Flight 1549 Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, center, looks at his First Officer Jeffrey B. Skiles, left, as host David Letterman reacts to an answer on the set of "The Late Show with David Letterman," Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009 in New York.

Flight 1549 crew gets laughs on 'Letterman'

NEW YORK (AP)—He has gotten a phone call from the president, a key to New York City and a standing ovation at a Broadway show. Now the pilot who safely landed his crippled jetliner in the Hudson River has gotten another all-American tribute—some ribbing from David Letterman.

Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger and his fellow crew members from US Airways Flight 1549 appeared Tuesday on the "Late Show with David Letterman" and retold the dramatic story of the Jan. 15 flight—this time, with plenty of laughs.

An example, according to the show's transcript: Letterman mentioned a passenger who opened a door in the rear of the plane, letting in water from the near-freezing river until it was closed again. Sullenberger jokingly replied, "I think it was Steve Martin who did that," referring to the comedian.

And when the host asked whether the Airbus A320 was designed to float, Sullenberger deadpanned, "We were very glad that this one remained intact and did."

The captain even addressed his now-ubiquitous nickname: "With a name like Chesley, Sully is just going to have to happen."

Sullenberger's crew mates generated several chuckles of their own, as when Letterman marveled at the plane's passage 1,000 feet over the George Washington Bridge minutes after birds apparently flew into and disabled both the aircraft's engines.

"It's better than zero feet," first officer and co-pilot Jeff Skiles said.

On a serious note, Sullenberger said the crew members have experienced some trouble sleeping, distractedness and flashbacks.

"You know, each of us, all five of us, have experienced some of those typical symptoms. It's just human nature," said Sullenberger, who was joined as well by flight attendants Sheila Dail, Donna Dent and Doreen Welsh.

Asked whether she was in shock after the emergency landing and safe rescue of all 155 people aboard, Welsh said, "Still in shock, I think—I mean, I'm on the David Letterman show."

Remembering you with love each day, although we are apart we are comforted by the knowledge that God has you in His keeping. We have you in our hearts.

First Anniversary Rosary

We, the family of the late

Joaquin Jones Castro

fondly remembered as 'JJ' 'Kindu' or 'Jack'

Humbly invite our relatives and friends to join us in prayer as we commemorate the passing of our dearly beloved unto eternal life.

Mass of intention is being offered daily at 6:00 p.m. at St. Jude Church.
Nightly rosary is being prayed at 7:00 p.m. at the family's residence in Lower Dandan (behind Joeten Dandan Shopping Center).

On Friday, February 13, 2009, rosary will be prayed at 5:30 p.m. at St. Jude Church followed by the Eucharistic Celebration at 6:00 p.m. Appreciation dinner will follow immediately at the family's residence.

Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Dangkulo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Elisa Maratita Castro and Children

'American Idol' hopefuls shine in solos

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Adam Lambert was among several "American Idol" hopefuls who gave the judges something to believe in during the final round of Hollywood Week.

Lambert, the theater actor who wowed the judges with a stripped down version of Cher's "Believe," was one of the contestants put through to the next stage of competition on the Fox singing contest.

During Tuesday's episode, 72 hopefuls performed with a band, backup singers and—if they chose—instruments.

A few of the contestants, including Joanna Pacitti and Casey Carlson, flubbed the lyrics. Stephen Fowler also forgot the words—twice. That didn't seem to matter though because they made it, along with such hopefuls as oil rig worker Michael Sarver, mother-of-three Lil Rounds, over-the-top comedian Nick Mitchell and blind pianist Scott MacIntyre.

The oh-so-emotional Tatiana Del Toro received the most screen time during Tuesday's episode. At one point, the cryin' crooner was shuffled from one room of anxious hopefuls to another.

She thought that meant she was out of the competition.

Surprise!

Del Toro and the others will perform at the "judges' mansion" during Wednesday's episode, in which the 36 semifinalists will be revealed.

Among those who didn't make the cut: rapping college student India Morrison and Michael Castro, the little brother of last season's fourth-place finisher, Jason Castro.

AP

In this image released by Paramount Pictures/DreamWorks, Jamie Foxx, portrays a schizophrenic Juilliard-trained cellist, left, and Robert Downey Jr. portrays a a Los Angeles Times columnist in a scene from "The Soloist."

US orchestras to help feed needy

NEW YORK (AP)—"The Soloist," the upcoming movie about a cellist who became homeless, has struck a chord with American orchestras. They are mobilizing to help feed the hungry.

At least 163 orchestras in 45 states are expected to participate in food drives in late March, a month before the movie's release on April 24, the League of American Orchestras said Tuesday.

"The Soloist" is based on the true story about a schizophrenic Juilliard-trained cellist (portrayed by Jamie Foxx) who becomes homeless and is helped by a *Los Angeles Times* columnist (Robert Downey Jr.).

"The story of 'The Soloist' reminds us that classical music has the power to sustain spirits and change lives, even under the most difficult circumstances," said Jesse Rosen, president and CEO of the league, a national service organization for orchestras.

The food will be distributed to local assistance organizations associated with the group Feeding America, which says its network provides food to more than 25 million Americans a year.

Some of the activities, as provided by the league:

■ The New York Philharmonic is partnering with Food Bank For New York City to hold a food drive during a Young People's Concert on March 28.

■ The Louisiana Philharmonic will ask picnicking concertgoers to make food donations at an April 22 outdoor concert in City Park.

■ The Detroit Symphony is starting a monthlong drive on March 27.

■ The Gemini Youth Orchestras organization of New York's Long Island is planning a four-hour marathon concert on April 19. Each family will be asked to donate cans of food.

■ The Rhode Island Philharmonic and Music School will collect food at concerts on March 19 and 21 and at the school's branches.

"Rhode Island is one of the hardest hit by this economic downturn," Executive Director David J. Beauchesne said in a statement. "We want to be part of the solution, not just another organization that is asking for assistance."

AP

In this image released by Paramount Pictures/DreamWorks, Jamie Foxx, portrays a schizophrenic Juilliard-trained cellist, left, and Robert Downey Jr. portrays a a Los Angeles Times columnist in a scene from "The Soloist."

Rare trove of Hebrew books displayed in NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—A rare trove of 11,000 Hebrew books and manuscripts went on display at Sotheby's this week as the auction house seeks to find a buyer for what is considered the greatest collection of Judaica in private hands.

The Valmadonna Trust Library includes documents of unparalleled significance including a copy of a 16th-century Hebrew Bible once owned by Westminster Abbey. Some have burn or water marks or other signs of religious persecution.

"I don't know any other collection quite like it in private hands. It even rivals some of the great institutional collections in the world," Arthur Kiron, curator of Judaica collections at the University of Pennsylvania, said. "There are very few cultural moments like this one where a collection of such great significance is made available for sale."

The complete library, valued at more than $40 million, is being shown in its entirety for the first time at Sotheby's Manhattan galleries until Feb. 19. The trust has asked the auction house to facilitate the sale of the complete collection to a public institution or private collector. It will not break up the collection or sell individuals works.

The Valmadonna Library is the lifelong pursuit of Jack Lunzer, an 88-year-old collector from London who was in New York on Monday for the opening of the exhibition.

Lunzer will not benefit from the proceeds of the sale, which is being handled by the trust, which will also decide whether to accept an offer from a collector or an institution.

But Lunzer has made his wishes known. "I would like our library to be acquired by the Library of Congress," he said. "That would be my great joy."

Sharon Mintz, curator of Jewish art at the Jewish Theological Seminary, which owns the largest public collection of Judaica in the United States, said any institution that acquired the library would immediately be catapulted "to one of the top-tier places of study of Hebrew culture."

Lunzer's most prized acquisition—one he pursued for more than 25 years—is a nearly pristine complete edition of the Babylonian Talmud printed in 1519-1523 by Daniel Bomberg, a Christian printer of Hebrew books.

The Talmud is a vast record of Jewish laws and traditions, and the nine-volume, leather-bound Bomberg copy is recognized as one of the most significant texts in the history of Hebrew printing, on which all other Talmud editions are modeled.

Lunzer said he first learned of its existence at the library of Westminster Abbey, where it had resided for four centuries, in 1951. He vowed then that he would own it one day. That dream was realized when he was able to purchase a 900-year-old copy of the Abbey's original charter and offer it in exchange for the Talmud.

"A library of this sort has immense responsibility," he said. "It spans hundreds of years of printing of liturgies, Bibles and above all else, the misery of the plight of Jews."

He was referring to the physical condition of some of the books, including censors' ink and burn and water marks.

"There were book bannings and book burnings and endless efforts to try and destroy the culture of the Jews," Sotheby's vice chairman David Redden said. The books are "important not just because of the information they contain but because of the stories they tell, how difficult life was."

Redden said that from the very beginning, Lunzer set out to assemble a library of early printing from every town and village that had a Hebrew printing press. That included such places as Calcutta and Bombay in India, Cairo and Shanghai, where Jews sought refuge during the Holocaust.

Books from Italy, the cradle of Hebrew printing, dominate the collection. There's also a huge collection of books from Constantinople and Jerusalem, and rare handwritten, illustrated texts and broadsheets dating to the 10th century.

Among the early handwritten books is a 1189 Pentateuch, or Hebrew Bible, known as the Codex Valmadonna I. It is the only dated Hebrew text to survive from medieval England, written before the Jews' expulsion in 1290.

Outside the United States, the great collections of Judaica are found in the British Library, the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, La Bibliotheque Nationale in France and the National Library of Israel.

The collection is displayed in four large rooms at Sotheby's Manhattan galleries.

Before coming to New York, it was housed in Lunzer's home, in "every single corner, nook and cranny, closet and attic," Redden said. Even a garden shed was converted into a repository for the books.

'Sopranos' actor Pastore settles assault suit

NEW YORK (AP)—Vincent Pastore of "The Sopranos" fame settled a $5.5 million lawsuit accusing him of assaulting his ex-fiancee.

The settlement was announced Tuesday just before Pastore, 62, was to testify for the second day in Manhattan's state Supreme Court in the assault trial filed by Lisa Regina, 47.

Lawyers for both sides said the terms of the settlement were confidential.

Pastore, who played gregarious, genial mob killer Salvatore "Big Pussy" Bonpensiero on the hit HBO series, said little as he left court.

"I think I just want to say, 'Thank God it's over,' and leave," the actor said. "How can anybody be happy about something like this?"

Regina, a writer, actress and acting coach, said she was "just glad there's closure and I can move forward."

She declined to disclose the settlement terms. "What I got, you can't put a price on—peace and closure."

Pastore

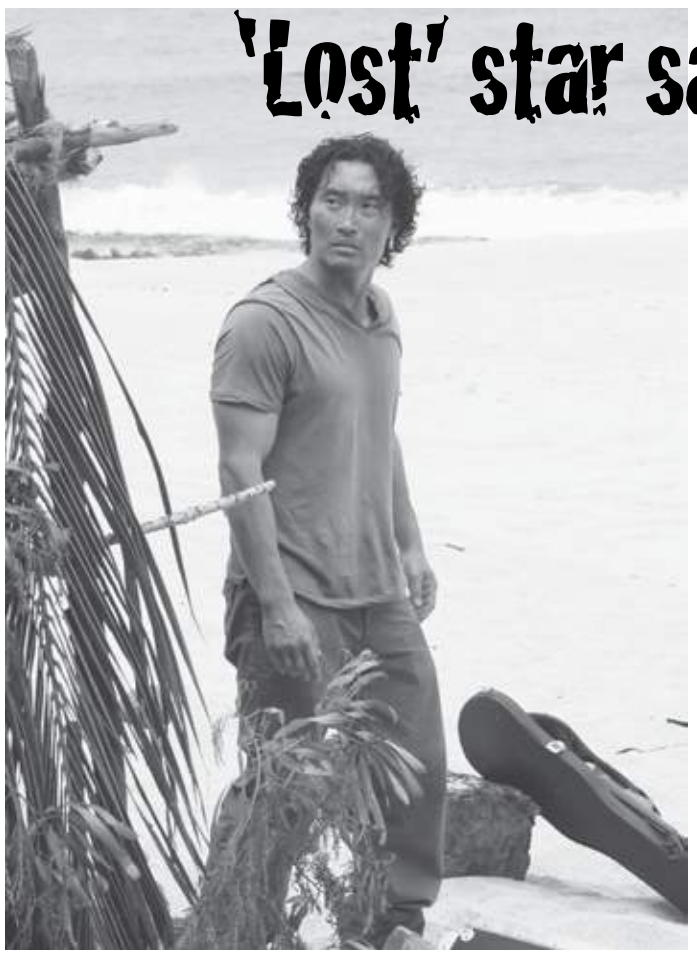
In her 2006 lawsuit, Regina said that Pastore attacked her on April 2, 2005, after they began a car trip to New Jersey, punching her, grabbing her hair and forcing her head down on the car's gear shift.

Pastore pleaded guilty later that year to attempted assault and was sentenced to 70 hours of community service and anger management therapy.

Pastore was the only witness to testify so far in the trial that began on Friday. He said he began fighting with Regina when she tried to call a former boyfriend, and wept when he concluded that she didn't love him.

He said the couple yelled and cursed at each other in the car on a street in Manhattan's Little Italy neighborhood. When he got out to open the passenger-side door, Regina started yelling at onlookers, "Big Pussy's beating me up! 'Sopranos!'," Pastore said.

Pastore said he yanked her out of his car and dumped her and her luggage on a street while she tore at his clothing, pulling down his pants. He denied hitting her, but said that he had pulled her hair.



'Lost' star says Smoke Monster secrets to emerge

LOS ANGELES (AP)—One of the biggest mysteries of "Lost"—the Smoke Monster—will be unveiled on the popular TV drama, and soon.

Actor Daniel Dae Kim, who plays Jin, said in an interview that the origin and nature of the malevolent dark cloud will be disclosed and viewers will even get a glimpse of its lair. Turns out the monster is as "old as the island" that's been home to the Oceanic jet-crash survivors and their foes.

Kim also cautioned against expectations that his character, Jin, will reunite with his wife, Sun (Yunjin Kim), even though Jin survived a freighter explosion and Sun returns to the island after escaping it.

Those events don't mean "they're particularly in the same place or chronologically in the same time," Kim said.

As for the atomic bomb that showed up in the "Jughead" episode, he said the show's producers rarely give something such prominence unless it counts in the island's mythology.

"That's a huge red herring if it's a red herring," Kim said, suggesting the bomb could help resolve plot points as the series ends in 2010. Perhaps the time-traveling that's popped up this season might be one of those.

In this image released by ABC, Daniel Dae Kim is shown in a scene from the ABC TV drama series "Lost."

AP

Prosecutors want Joe Francis' bail revoked

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Federal prosecutors want a judge to revoke Joe Francis' bail while he awaits trial on tax evasion charges.

n this Jan. 18, 2009 file photo, Joe Francis is shown at the 2009 Ray-Ban Visionary Award honoring Ewan McGregor during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

AP

In a brief filed Monday, prosecutors argue Francis has shown a "complete lack of respect" for the court's authority by missing a hearing earlier this month. A judge jailed the "Girls Gone Wild" creator overnight, but later granted his release on house arrest.

The prosecutors argue that Francis mischaracterized the court's action and downplayed his role in missing the hearing by issuing a statement after his release.

Francis' statement said he missed the hearing because he was ill and his brief incarceration resulted from a "miscommunication."

A phone message left for Francis' attorney was not immediately returned Tuesday.

Francis is due back in court Wednesday.

'Grey's Anatomy' co-star: Heigl and Knight leaving

In this Jan. 7, 2009 file photo, Katherine Heigl poses backstage with the favorite comedy movie award for "27 Dresses" at the 35th Annual People's Choice Awards in Los Angeles.

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Grey's Anatomy" cast member James Pickens Jr. says the medical drama will be saying goodbye to Katherine Heigl and T.R. Knight. Pickens, who plays Dr. Richard Webber on the ABC series, told Us Weekly magazine that Heigl and Knight are leaving.

Pickens says he wishes Heigl "nothing but the best," the magazine reported online Tuesday. He says his other co-star, Knight, wants to pursue other "career paths."

Publicists for Knight and for series creator Shonda Rhimes declined comment. Requests for comment from Heigl's publicist and ABC were not immediately returned.

Heigl, who plays Dr. Izzie Stevens, starred in the films "Knocked Up" and "27 Dresses," and has another movie, "The Ugly Truth," coming out.

Just under 50 million watch Obama in prime-time

NEW YORK (AP)—An estimated 49.5 million people watched Barack Obama's first prime-time news conference as president.

Nielsen Media Research says Monday night's session was televised live on eight different networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC and Univision.

It wasn't the most-watched presidential news conference. A month after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, President Bush held a news conference watched by 64.8 million people. And a news conference about the economy held less than a month after President Clinton took office in 1993 drew 64.3 million viewers.

In 1993, the average U.S. home had 40 channels. Now, it's 118 channels, according to Nielsen.

AP

President Barack Obama answers a question during his first prime time televised news conference in the East Room if the White House in Washington , Monday, Feb. 9, 2009.

Couple rules out divorce for sake of grown children

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: Two years ago, my husband of 25 years, "Glen," discovered that I'd had an affair 10 years earlier. After he found out, he couldn't sleep or eat, had recurring nightmares about the affair and was suicidal. He says it is still the first thing that pops into his mind when he wakes up and the last thing he thinks about when he goes to sleep. Neither of us thinks he will ever be able to get over it.

Glen doesn't want to be married to someone who would lie and cheat, and I don't want to be married to someone who can't love me. Actually, I don't think I love him, either. We have discussed divorce many times but it always comes down to our kids.

They are all on their own, but they would be devastated if we divorced—especially if they knew what caused it. We don't want them to go through the pain that Glen has gone through. We love them and cherish the times we still have together as a family. If we were to divorce, it would never be the same.

Are we crazy to stay together for the kids?

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN ILLINOIS

DEAR GOING: I am not the person who should answer that question. Only you and Glen can do that. I can, however, advise you that you and your husband are two years overdue for couples therapy.

Infidelity is painful, but it is possible to recover from it, heal a marriage and emerge stronger than ever as a couple. However, if it is not possible to do that, then divorce is a preferable alternative to the marriage you have described.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have a simple answer for "Frustrated in Pennsylvania" (Nov. 30), whose wife forgets to enter her check amounts into her check register. I had the same problem when I was first married.

My smart wife went to the bank and asked for advice. The checks I've used ever since make a carbon copy. The date, to whom the check is written and the amount are all automatically recorded on the copy. The checks come in a wide selection of designs—and the peace of mind is really nice.

BOB B., LE CENTER, MINN.

DEAR BOB: Many readers wrote, as you did, that duplicate checks are the solution to this common problem, which, by the way, affects both men and women. Read on:

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Here's what I did with my husband. We got duplicate checks. Having a copy of the check simplifies balancing the checkbook.

After first complaining he was being treated like a child about money, he got hit with multiple overdraft fees, and we were unable to attend an event he was dying to go to because we didn't have the money. He is much better now, but it took a lot of convincing to get him to use them.

LORRAINE H., SIERRA VISTA, ARIZ.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I could never resolve our conflicts over finances. We have more arguments about money than any other subject. We finally resolved it by getting three separate accounts: hers, mine and "household," to which we both contribute equally.

GERALD IN LA QUINTA, CALIF.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have been looking online to buy a used car, but I don't know how early or late to call the owners. Can you please enlighten me on the appropriate hours of the day—or night? Thanks!

FAITH IN HANNIBAL, MO.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR FAITH: The rule of thumb that I was taught is that calls between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. are appropriate. To call before or after that could be intrusive because the person may retire early or sleep a little later.

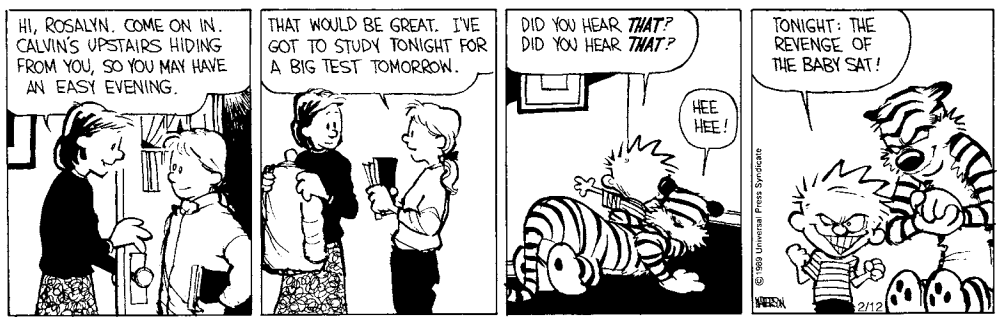
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HI, ROSALYN. COME ON IN. CALVIN'S UPSTAIRS HIDING FROM YOU, SO YOU MAY HAVE AN EASY EVENING.
THAT WOULD BE GREAT. I'VE GOT TO STUDY TONIGHT FOR A BIG TEST TOMORROW.
DID YOU HEAR THAT? DID YOU HEAR THAT?
HEE HEE!
TONIGHT: THE REVENGE OF THE BABY SAT!
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate
2/12

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

SIR, BEFORE WE BEGIN, I HAVE JUST ONE REQUEST
SHOOT
PLEASE DON'T ORDER ANYTHING ON FIRE
I BOUGHT YOU A NEW SUIT, DIDN'T I?!
YES, BUT I STILL HAVE THE DREAMS
OH, LOOK! POPCORN SHRIMP!
JIM DAVIS 2-12 © 2009 PAWS, INC. All rights Reserved.
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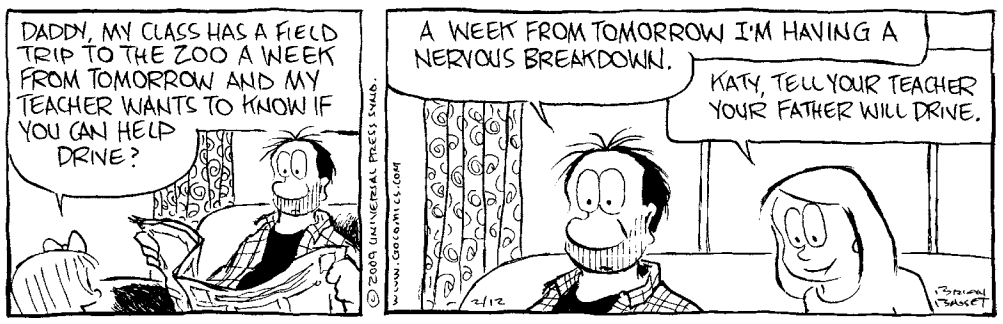
Text GARFIELD to 22646 US ONLY

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DADDY, MY CLASS HAS A FIELD TRIP TO THE ZOO A WEEK FROM TOMORROW AND MY TEACHER WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU CAN HELP DRIVE?
A WEEK FROM TOMORROW I'M HAVING A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.
KATY, TELL YOUR TEACHER YOUR FATHER WILL DRIVE.
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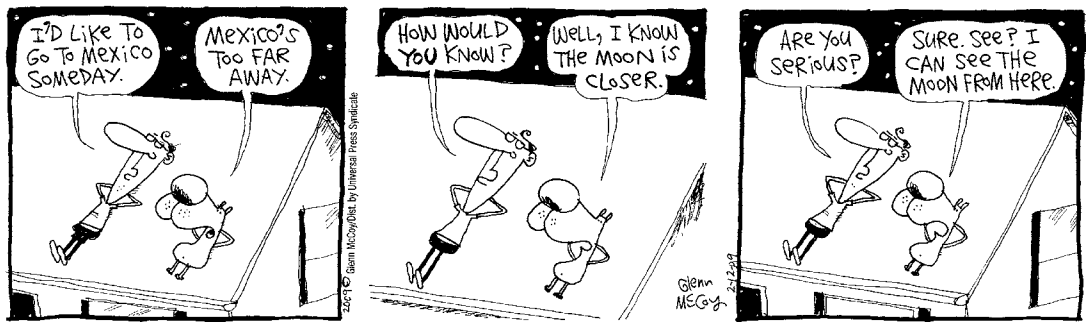
WWW.GOCOMICS.COM
2/12

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I'D LIKE TO GO TO MEXICO SOMEDAY.
MEXICO'S TOO FAR AWAY.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?
WELL, I KNOW THE MOON IS CLOSER.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
SURE. SEE? I CAN SEE THE MOON FROM HERE.
© Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

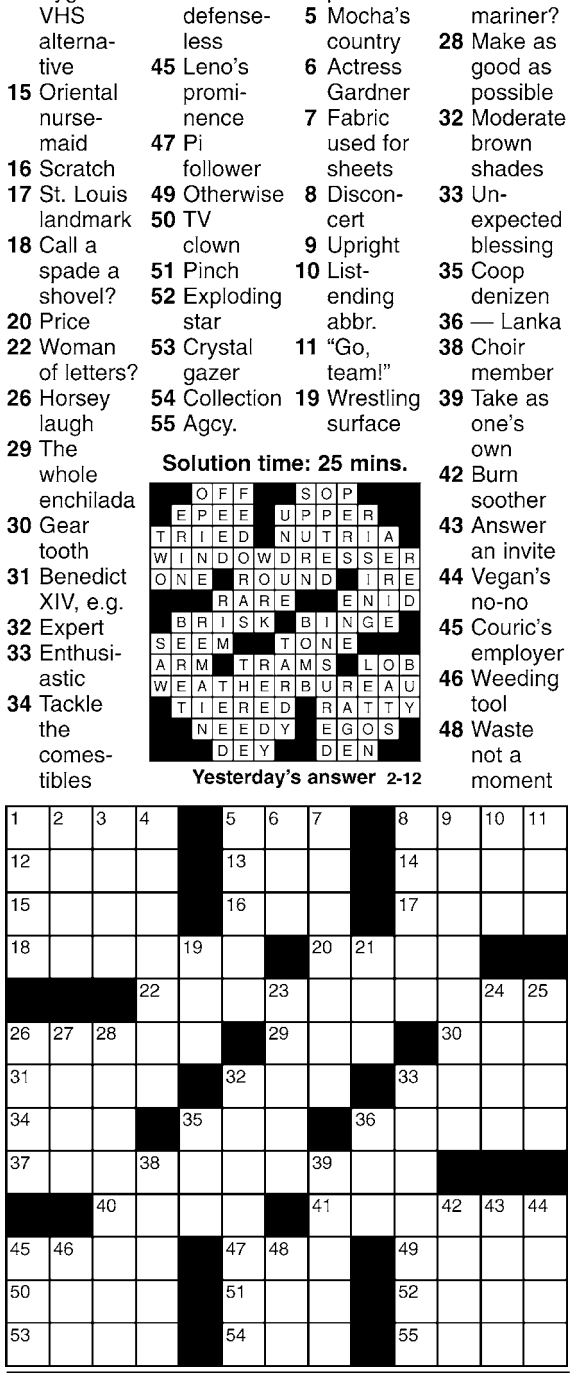
ACROSS
1 Seed covering
5 Shrill bark
8 State with conviction
12 Conflagration
13 Leading lady
14 Bygone VHS alternative
15 Oriental nursemaid
16 Scratch
17 St. Louis landmark
18 Call a spade a shovel?
20 Price
22 Woman of letters?
26 Horsey laugh
29 The whole enchilada
30 Gear tooth
31 Benedict XIV, e.g.
32 Expert
33 Enthusiastic
34 Tackle the comestibles
35 "Whadja say?"
36 Wise lawgiver
37 Staff-meeting prop, often
40 Options list
41 Render defenseless
45 Leno's prominence
47 Pi follower
49 Otherwise
50 TV clown
51 Pinch
52 Exploding star
53 Crystal gazer
54 Collection
55 Agcy.

DOWN
1 Somewhere out there
2 Frost
3 Persia, now
4 English Channel port
5 Mocha's country
6 Actress Gardner
7 Fabric used for sheets
8 Disconcert
9 Upright
10 Listending abbr.
11 "Go, team!"
19 Wrestling surface
21 Pussycat's partner
23 Topped chip
24 Not "for here"
25 Big Apple cardinal
26 Jet forth
27 Ancient mariner?
28 Make as good as possible
32 Moderate brown shades
33 Unexpected blessing
35 Coop denizen
36 — Lanka
38 Choir member
39 Take as one's own
42 Burn soother
43 Answer an invite
44 Vegan's no-no
45 Couric's employer
46 Weeding tool
48 Waste not a moment

Solution time: 25 mins.

		O	F	F			S	O	P			
	E	P	E	E			U	P	P	E	R	
T	R	I	E	D			N	U	T	R	I	A
W	I	N	D	O	W	D	R	E	S	S	E	R
O	N	E		R	O	U	N	D		I	R	E
			R	A	R	E			E	N	I	D
	B	R	I	S	K		B	I	N	G	E	
S	E	E	M			T	O	N	E			
A	R	M		T	R	A	M	S		L	O	B
W	E	A	T	H	E	R	B	U	R	E	A	U
	T	I	E	R	E	D		R	A	T	T	Y
		N	E	E	D	Y		E	G	O	S	
			D	E	Y			D	E	N		

Yesterday's answer 2-12



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Ricci, 29; Arsenio Hall, 54; Joanna Kerns, 56; Judy Blume, 71

Happy Birthday: It's time to form alliances, friendships and partnerships with people who get what you are trying to do. Be willing to take full responsibility and to show your dedication in order to get others on board. The past will benefit you as you rely on what you have learned through tough times. Step into the spotlight. Your numbers are 6, 9, 13, 21, 23, 37, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Look out for your own interests. An opportunity to do things a little differently will bring good results and will help you improve a relationship with someone. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You have to please the people who can influence your position and your future. A problem with someone who is not telling you the truth may result in your being responsible for his or her actions. Don't believe everything you hear. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Your love life should pick up drastically, whether you are single or already seeing someone special. Take pride in the way you look and the things you do. Keep busy learning and picking up pertinent information. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Fix up your place or consider what will make your living arrangements more suitable to your needs, but don't overspend. A false impression will lead you to believe in someone who probably isn't trustworthy. Emotional problems will cause ill health. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You'll be right on target if you speak your mind and set your plans in motion. A partnership will help you excel in ways you cannot imagine. Travel, intrigue and good times are in the stars. Get out and have some fun. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You can change your direction by taking on a project that can snowball into doing something you enjoy. Being as self-sufficient as possible will lead to independence and happiness. Detail, creativity and innovation will pay off. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Work from home or start your own business on the side. New opportunities will arise through the people you talk to and the places you visit. A move or change will lighten your stress and help you feel better about your future. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Before you make or accept any changes, find out what everyone else is doing. You may be led astray by someone who wants you out of the way for his or her benefit. Don't give in to peer pressure or guilt trips. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't let your emotions get the better of you when there is so much to accomplish. Hooking up with someone you used to work with will bring new light to a possible professional future. It's how you handle change that will count. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't let anyone push you into something you don't want to do or don't agree with. Stand firm against emotional blackmail. An uncertain factor involving finances, legalities or a settlement must be dealt with quickly. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Good fortune is heading in your direction, so take advantage of it. You can sign contracts, make deals or even collect an old debt with greater ease. An open discussion with someone about your dreams, hopes and wishes will help you make them come true. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Secrets and surprises are in the stars. You should be able to solidify your chance of getting into a worthwhile partnership with someone who has just as much to offer as you. Talks will lead to change, leading to greater prosperity. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a master at what will work and are a far-sighted individual. You have strong convictions and morals and care for those you love.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	9			3			6	
2	3						7	1
		6				2		
			7		8			
1								8
			5		9			
		8				5		
5	1						9	4
	7			2			3	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	7	2	5	9	1	4	8	6
5	6	9	8	7	4	2	1	3
4	8	1	6	2	3	5	9	7
9	3	5	4	1	8	7	6	2
7	1	4	2	6	9	3	5	8
8	2	6	7	3	5	9	4	1
1	4	3	9	8	7	6	2	5
6	5	8	3	4	2	1	7	9
2	9	7	1	5	6	8	3	4

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/11

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BUTCHART GARDENS, BC **Solution: 9 letters**

D	R	O	S	S	E	N	C	I	R	O	T	S	I	H
L	U	C	K	G	B	L	O	O	M	V	Ⓓ	C	O	C
I	O	A	D	A	N	A	C	E	V	E	H	Ⓡ	H	E
W	T	I	S	T	A	R	N	I	G	E	T	R	Ⓘ	E
E	R	V	O	T	A	R	C	D	R	I	Y	O	S	Ⓑ
B	N	N	I	C	N	T	B	R	C	S	P	U	T	E
D	I	E	L	S	O	A	Y	U	A	R	O	S	E	N
O	A	O	K	R	I	L	L	N	T	H	T	A	P	V
O	T	M	I	N	A	T	T	P	N	U	E	N	I	E
W	N	A	U	R	U	H	E	E	R	T	S	A	A	N
T	U	P	O	R	E	S	E	E	D	A	S	I	Z	U
N	O	L	E	M	V	R	K	N	C	C	U	L	Z	T
E	F	E	U	E	G	N	A	R	W	C	R	O	A	O
R	R	M	E	D	I	T	E	R	R	A	N	E	A	N
B	S	T	U	R	G	E	O	N	A	I	L	A	T	I

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Acre, Aeolian, Arbutus, Band, Beech, Benvenuto, Bird, Bloom, Brentwood, Bridge, Canada, Cherry, Chrysanthemums, Floral, Fountain, Greenhouse, Historic, Horticulture, Italian, Lawn, Luck, Maple, Mediterranean, Path, Piazza, Pigeon, Plant, Rare, Rink, Rose, Ross, Russet, Seed, Skate, Soil, Star, Sturgeon, Sunken, Tacca, Totem, Tour, Tree, Victoria, Visit, Wild

Yesterday's Answer: Budget

WONDERWORD offers the "Book of Celebrities," for $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to **WONDERWORD**, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

• 3br, 1bath house • 2br, 2bath house. Nice view of Mangaha w/ swimming pool. Available in Capitol Hill. Call 322-5717

BUD'S BAR
Sweetheart Night. Sat 14 @7pm. All Ladies coming through the door will receive one free Rose & Champagne plus a raffle ticket to win many gift & cash prizes. Merchant marines will be on special–after every $5.00 spent you will receive another raffle to win more.

HELP WANTED
TUNA LONGLINE FISHERMAN
Must have: Sea time and verified high seas longline fishing experience • Working knowledge of vessel safety, operation and high seas of fishing industry. • Ability to spend up to 4 weeks at sea.
Locals. IRs and contract workers.
Apply at **USA Islands Seafood, Inc./Saipan USA Fisheries, Inc.** at Beach Road, Garapan

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

House for rent or lease in As Lito, 4 bedroom, 2 1/2 bathroom. For more info. pls. call 234-6695

BUD'S BAR
Every Wednesday @ 9pm
Jerry & Elli Jaming Band
Every Friday @ 9pm
Sam Joyner & The Blues Band
Let's Jam

NEED PROPERTIES
We are looking for all kinds of properties, vacant property, commercial building, house, or apartment for long term lease or for sale. Interested owners, you may visit Yuta Office beside Bank of Guam in San Antonio.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent. 2 bedroom $210. 3 bedroom $270. Located in Koblerville. Contact # 288-0728. Yoon Won Suck.

Name: Janet P. Catalan
Address: PMB 1483 Box 10005
Saipan, MP 96050
Phone: (670) 235-8377

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Janet P. Catalan Petitioner,	)	FCD DI CIVIL ACTION
vs.	)	NO. 08-0323
Danny Catalan Respondent,	)	**VERIFIED EX-PARTE MOTION FOR AN ORDER TO APPEAR AND PLEAD AND FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION**

MOTION

COMES NOW, the Petitioner, Janet P. Catalan, and respectfully moves this court, pursuant to 7 CMC Section 1301 and 1302 for an Order to Appear and Plead and to serve the Petition, Summons and the Order of this Court upon the Respondent, by publication in a news paper of general circulation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands because Respondent cannot be found or served.

Dated this 29th day of January, 2009.

/s/ PETITIONER

AUTOMOTIVE

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Name: Jeffrey P. Cabrera
Address: P.O. Box 501116
Saipan, MP 96050
Phone: (670) 237-2700

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Jeffrey P. Cabrera Petitioner,	)	FCD DI CIVIL ACTION
vs.	)	NO. 08-0443
Xiaqin Zhou Cabrera Respondent,	)	**VERIFIED EX-PARTE MOTION FOR AN ORDER TO APPEAR AND PLEAD AND FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION**

MOTION

COMES NOW, the Petitioner, Jeffrey P. Cabrera, and respectfully moves this court, pursuant to 7 CMC Section 1301 and 1302 for an Order to Appear and Plead and to serve the Petition, Summons and the Order of this Court upon the Respondent, by publication in a news paper of general circulation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands because Respondent cannot be found or served.

Dated this 29th day of January, 2009.

/s/ PETITIONER

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Tejada charged with lying in relation to steroid scandal

WASHINGTON (AP)—All-Star shortstop Miguel Tejada has been charged with lying to Congress about an ex-teammate's use of steroids, the latest baseball player to get caught up in a web of cheating and juicing that has stained the sport.

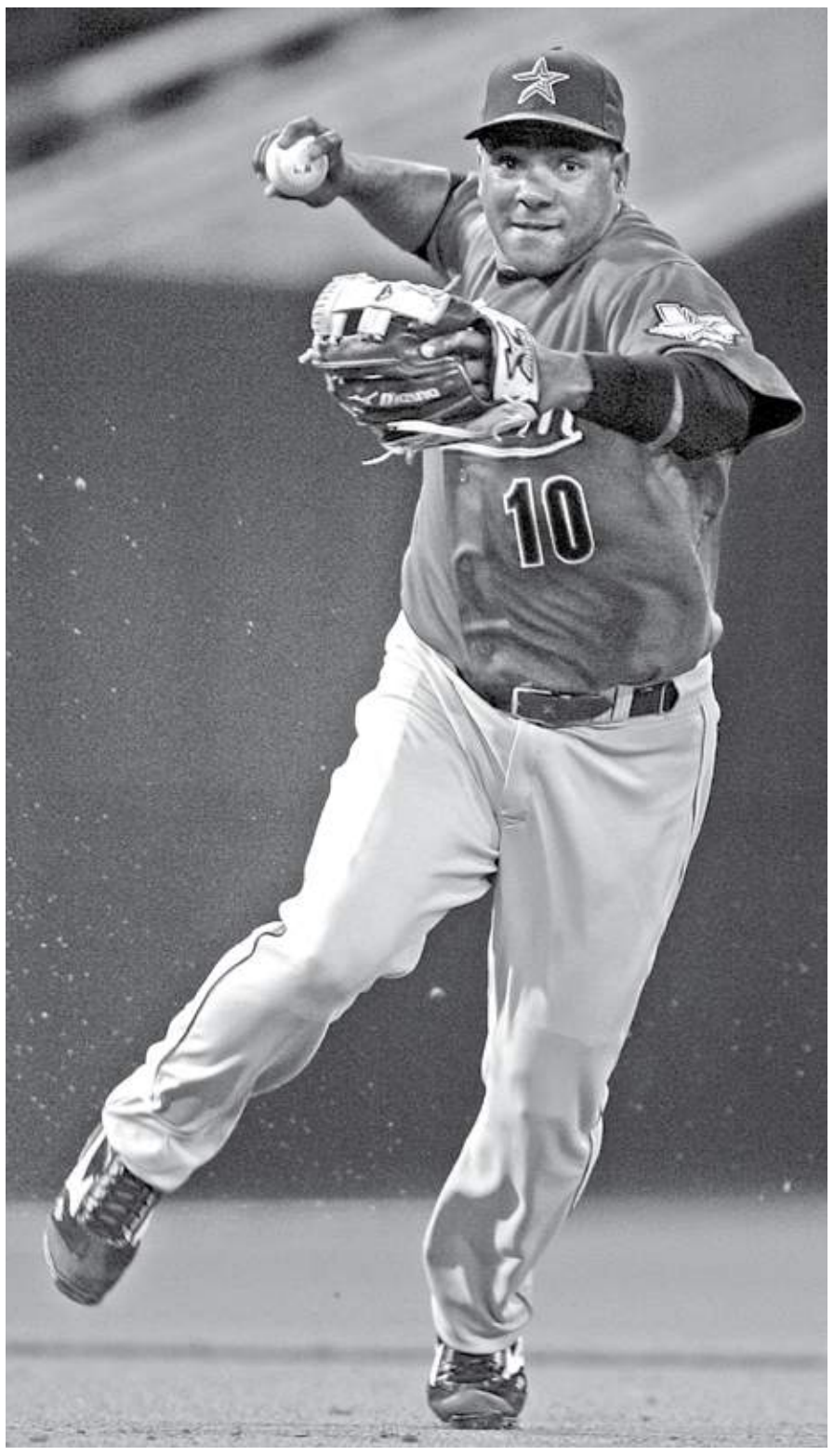
Tejada is expected to plead guilty in court Wednesday. The charges against him were outlined in documents filed Tuesday in federal court in Washington.

The teammate is not identified in court documents, but he is referred to as having played with Tejada on the Oakland Athletics. Tejada won the 2002 American League Most Valuable Player award while playing for the Athletics and is a five-time All-Star. He now plays for the Houston Astros.

The documents indicate that a plea agreement has been reached with Tejada. The court papers were filed a day after superstar Alex Rodriguez acknowledged past use of performance-enhancing drugs. The New York Yankees third baseman does not face charges.

The FBI also is investigating whether Roger Clemens, a seven-time Cy Young winner, lied to Congress last year when he denied using steroids or human growth hormone. Clemens and Rodriguez top a list of big name, drug-tainted stars, including Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire and Jose Canseco, whose actions cast doubt on their on-field accomplishments.

Tejada faces as much as a year in jail if convicted on the misdemeanor charge of making misrepresentations to Congress. Under federal guidelines, he would probably receive a lighter sentence.



AP

This April 2, 2008 file photo shows Houston Astros shortstop Miguel Tejada making a running throw after picking up a slow roller hit by San Diego Padres' Justin Huber in the third inning of an MLB baseball game in San Diego.

The charge came in a legal document called a "criminal information," which only can be filed with the defendant's consent and typically signals a plea deal. A hearing is scheduled for 11 a.m. EST Wednesday in Washington, and Tejada and his lawyer plan to hold a news conference later in the day in Houston.

Messages left for his attorney, Mark Tuohey, were not immediately returned.

In the documents filed Tuesday, Tejada is charged with lying to investigators for the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in 2005. Congressional staffers did not place Tejada under oath when they questioned him, but they advised him "of the importance of providing truthful answers," according to the court papers.

During the interview, Tejada denied knowledge of an ex-teammate's use of performance-enhancing drugs.

Tejada "unlawfully withheld pertinent information from the committee because defendant Tejada, before and during his interview with the committee staff, then and there well knew that player #1, one of his teammates on the Oakland Athletics, had used steroids and HGH," the papers state.

Former Rep. Tom Davis, a Virginia Republican who chaired the committee in 2005, said he believed Tejada lied.

"It just shows that when you do something illegal like this, that you pay a price," Davis said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The court papers filed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Durham charge that during spring training in 2003, Tejada had purchased a substance believed to be HGH from the player, giving him payments of $3,100 and $3,200.

In the Mitchell Report, which examined steroid use in baseball, Oakland outfielder Adam Piatt is cited saying he discussed steroid use with Tejada and having provided Tejada with testosterone and human growth hormone.

The Mitchell Report, issued in December 2007, also included copies of checks allegedly written by Tejada to Piatt in March 2003 for $3,100 and $3,200—the same payment amounts in Tuesday's court filing.

Tejada came under scrutiny after another ex-teammate, Rafael Palmeiro of the Baltimore Orioles, testified before the House committee.

In January 2008, the House panel asked the Justice Department to investigate whether Tejada lied to committee investigators when he was interviewed in connection with the Palmeiro steroids case.

When that same House panel held a hearing in March 2005, Palmeiro jabbed a finger at lawmakers and declared: "I have never used steroids, period." Palmeiro was suspended by baseball later that year after testing positive for a steroid.

The committee looked into whether Palmeiro should face perjury charges but eventually dropped the matter.

Palmeiro said his positive test could have resulted from a B-12 vitamin injection given to him by Tejada.

That prompted Congress to talk to Tejada.

Appeals court will soon decide fate of 'the list'

NEW YORK (AP)—So who are the other 103?

Alex Rodriguez turned out to be just one name on the infamous list of players who tested positive for banned drugs during baseball's anonymous survey in 2003. Will more names follow?

"Our program, which was designed to be confidential, if it turns out not to be, that's something that causes concern," union head Donald Fehr said Tuesday.

Baseball's highest-paid and perhaps most-talented player, Rodriguez said Monday that he used banned drugs from 2001-2003 while playing for Texas. The admission came two days after Sports Illustrated reported that his name was among the players on the list.

Former union head Marvin Miller called for an investigation of federal prosecutors to help determine whether there was a government leak of the test results, which remain under court seal.

"I think the first question ought to be: 104 names all testing positive, but you leak only A-Rod's. Why is that?" Miller said.

The fate of "the list" will be determined next by 11 appeals court judges in California.

If prosecutors are allowed to use the list and bring players before grand juries and trial courts, additional stars might be forced to admit they used steroids.

"It's definitely not fair to just pinpoint one guy," Boston's Kevin Youkilis said. "I don't know if somebody had it in for him. I don't know what because it seems like just to take one name out of that whole group is a little odd to me. If he was named with 10 other players, would that have been fair? I don't know? If they'd have listed all 104?"

Hall of Famer Goose Gossage hopes the list becomes public.

"I want to know who these other 100 guys are," he said. "Let's get it all out in the open. It certainly is not fair to A-Rod or to Bonds. They're dragging A-Rod down."

Rodriguez was at the University of Miami's campus Tuesday morning for a workout session, with several photographers staking out the gym he frequents and surrounding his vehicle. He did not comment.

Rodriguez is to be the headline attraction at the school's annual baseball banquet Friday night, when the Hurricanes' home park gets renamed in honor of the $3.9 million gift he gave Miami in 2003.

Team co-chairman Hank Steinbrenner, speaking at the team's spring training complex, backed Rodriguez.

"I'm not angry at him at all, and I support him 100 percent," Steinbrenner said Tuesday night. "We support him, and we're going to do everything we can to make this season a successful one."

Former AL MVP Jose Canseco, who in a pair of books revealed details on drug use in baseball, hopes to meet with commissioner Bud Selig and Fehr.

"I think I have the ear of the nation now," Canseco said. "I think everyone realizes I have not in any way, shape or form tried to create smoke and mirrors like Major League Baseball has and the players have. I have been excruciatingly honest about what's going on in baseball."

Marc Ganis, president of the consulting company Sports Corp. Ltd., said Rodriguez will be viewed differently by fans as his home-run total climbs from 553 and he approaches Barry Bonds' mark of 762. The A-Rod brand has been tainted, and Ganis said it will cost Rodriguez endorsement deals.

"He is going to have a cloud over him, particularly as he approaches the home run record, where before this revelation, he was considered the anti-Bonds, the guy who was going to get the greatest record in all of sports back into the hands of a clean athlete," Ganis said. "He will always have this postscript. Sponsors don't like postscripts."

The list was a spreadsheet seized by federal agents from Comprehensive Drug Testing in Long Beach, Calif., in April 2004. The agents had a search warrant for the testing records of 10 players involved with BALCO. When they saw the spreadsheet, agents obtained additional search warrants, copied the entire computer directory and took the records of all the players.

Test samples and records were to remain anonymous and be destroyed, but MLB and the players' association couldn't arrange for the destruction with the test companies between Nov. 13, 2003—when the results were finalized—and that Nov. 19, when the union because aware of the subpoena.

The players' association filed motions to get the records back and won in three U.S. District Courts. But a 9th circuit panel reversed in a 2-1 vote in December 2006, a decision the panel mostly reaffirmed its decision in January 2008.

The full 9th Circuit then threw out that panel decision and decided to have 11 judges hear the matter. It included five judges appointed by Bill Clinton, four by George W. Bush and one each by Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Oral arguments were heard in December, and it's uncertain when a decision will be issued.

"I think it's too close to call. These are very hard issues and they're new issues. It's really hard to predict," said Orin S. Kerr, professor of law at The George Washington University Law School. "This is a lawyers' battle for people that can hire very good lawyers, and that's not true in most criminal cases."

Prosecutors want to ask the wider group of players where they obtained steroids, which might advance investigations. The players' association, citing privacy rights, claims the search violated the Fourth Amendment.

The case, which could wind up before the Supreme Court, might define what "plain view" means in the digital age. Or the 9th Circuit could decide it on procedural grounds.

"It really depends on how they write it. So this could be an extremely important case, and it could be a very narrow case," Kerr said. "It's an unusual case in that the information has value outside the criminal case, which is not normally the case."

James' late foul costs Cavs in loss to Pacers

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—LeBron James did it all Tuesday night.

He scored 47 points, had seven rebounds, four assists and had the Pacers crowd oohing and aahing all night. So, of course, he also made the decisive play—for the wrong team.

James was called for a foul with 0.2 seconds left on Danny Granger, who hit a free throw to give Indiana a 96-95 victory over the Cavaliers. James started walking toward the locker room before the final buzzer sounded.

It was a jarring loss for the Cavs, who dropped two straight for the first time this season.

James was brilliant, but ended up on the short end of a call he clearly disagreed with.

It appeared James would send the game into overtime when the Cavs opted for an alley-oop off an inbounds pass with 0.4 seconds left. James never got to the ball, but Granger was called for a foul and James made both free throws to tie the score at 95.

Then the Pacers tried the same play. This time Granger was on the receiving end, James was chasing and the NBA's second-leading scorer was called for the foul. Granger made the first and intentionally missed the second as James walked toward the locker room in disgust.

Troy Murphy led the short-handed and nicked-up Pacers with 18 points. Granger, playing with a sore knee, finished with 16.

Indiana also was without three key players—Jeff Foster, Mike Dunleavy and Marquis Daniels.

But on a night James turned Conseco Fieldhouse into his own personal showcase, the Pacers ended their nine-game losing streak to the Cavs and won for only the second time in six games.

The wild finish was the culmination of a game in which neither team led by more than eight.

Indiana trailed 68-67 after three quarters, but opened the fourth with seven straight points to take control.

The Pacers never trailed again and the Cavs couldn't get even until James' nifty pass to the cutting Wally Szczerbiak for a lineup made it 93-93 with 20.8 seconds left.

Indiana tried to play for the final shot, and it appeared T.J. Ford had hit the winner with his 17-foot fadeaway with 0.8 seconds left.

series with Miami for the fourth consecutive year. Kenyon Martin had 18 points and 10 rebounds, while J.R. Smith scored 10 for Denver, which wasted much of a 20-point first-half lead before pulling away late and defeating Miami for the eighth straight time.

Dwyane Wade scored 33 points on 12-for-22 shooting for Miami, which has lost five of its last seven games. Shawn Marion scored 14 and Mario Chalmers added 10 for Miami.

Hawks 111, Wizards 90

At Atlanta, the Hawks bounced back emphatically from their worst loss of the season. Joe Johnson scored 22 points and the Hawks shook off an embarrassing home defeat to the Clippers.

Atlanta raced to a 9-1 lead before most of the sparse crowd had even settled into its seats. The Hawks pushed the margin as high as 22 points in the second quarter against an injury-plagued team that has managed the modest feat of back-to-back wins only once this season.

The Wizards were coming off a 119-117 victory over the Indiana Pacers. But they missed their first seven shots and never seriously challenged the Hawks, who clearly had something to prove after a 121-97 loss to Clippers over the weekend.

AP

Indiana Pacers forward Danny Granger (33) is fouled by Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James near the end of of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009.

Spurs 108, Nets 93

At East Rutherford, N.J., Tim Duncan had 27 points, nine rebounds and eight assists and the Spurs beat the Nets for the 13th straight time.

Matt Bonner scored 13 of his 22 points in the opening 5 minutes of the third quarter in helping the Spurs win for the 15th time in 19 games since the start of 2009. Tony Parker added 20 points and Bruce Bowen came off the bench in the third quarter to help cool off a hot Vince Carter, who led the Nets with 25 points.

Devin Harris added 21 points for New Jersey, which lost its second straight game after winning a season-high four straight. Brook Lopez added 18 points.

Nuggets 99, Heat 82

At Miami, Chauncey Billups scored 13 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter, Carmelo Anthony finished with 19 points and nine rebounds, and the Nuggets swept the series with Miami for the fourth consecutive year. Kenyon Martin had 18 points and 10 rebounds, while J.R. Smith scored 10 for Denver, which wasted much of a 20-point first-half lead before pulling away late and defeating Miami for the eighth straight time.

Dwyane Wade scored 33 points on 12-for-22 shooting for Miami, which has lost five of its last seven games. Shawn Marion scored 14 and Mario Chalmers added 10 for Miami.

Raptors 110, Timberwolves 102

At Minneapolis, Jason Kapono, the two-time defending 3-point contest champion, scored 18 points on 7-of-10 shooting as a reserve.

Both teams were missing their big stars.

Jermaine O'Neal had 22 points and eight rebounds and Joey Graham scored 24 for the Raptors, who rallied from 13 down in the third quarter in their third straight game without All-Star forward Chris Bosh.

Randy Foye had a career-high 33 points and eight rebounds for the Wolves, who played the first game of the rest of the season without center Al Jefferson.

Mavericks 118, Kings 100

At Dallas, the Mavericks were just fine in their first game without injured Jason Terry against one of the NBA's worst teams. Josh Howard and Antoine Wright both had 23 points, Dirk Nowitzki had 21 and J.J. Barea had 10 as the primary fill-in for sixth-man standout Terry.

The Kings (11-42) became the first NBA team guaranteed to have a losing season—and they still have 29 games remaining. Sacramento is 2-13 since beating Dallas 102-95 at home on Jan. 11.

Terry, the team's second-leading scorer (19.9 points a game), broke his left hand against Chicago over the weekend and had surgery Monday. Terry is expected to be out three to six weeks.

Bulls 107, Pistons 102

At Chicago, Ben Gordon converted the go-ahead four-point play, Derrick Rose and Tyrus Thomas made strong contributions late, and the Bulls rallied.

Playing their first home game since Jan. 23, the Bulls trailed 100-90 with about 3 1/2 minutes. But with Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen watching, they showed some of their old mettle and finished on a 17-2 run.

The Pistons were without the Allen Iverson, who had the flu. Even so, they appeared to be in good shape before Chicago's rousing finish.

Warriors 144, Knicks 127

At Oakland, Calif., Stephen Jackson had a season-high 35 points, 10 assists and six rebounds, and Jamal Crawford added 21 points against his former team. Kelenna Azubuike had 22 points and 10 rebounds as the Warriors obliterated their previous season-high for points with almost no defensive opposition from the Knicks, who lost their fifth straight.

Al Harrington had 24 points and nine rebounds amid constant boos from the Oakland fans who embraced him just two years ago. Harrington, who invited the boos with repeated waves of his hand, was traded to the Knicks on Nov. 21 for Crawford.

The teams met in New York eight days after the trade, with the Knicks winning 138-125 in the Warriors' worst defensive outing of the year. Golden State set its own season-high for points in the rematch, easily surpassing a 133-point effort in a triple-overtime game last month.

Lakers 105, Thunder 98

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant showed no lingering effects from the flu, scoring 34 points and becoming the youngest player in NBA history to reach 23,000. Bryant had chills and fever and needed intravenous fluids at halftime of Sunday's game against the Cavaliers.

With fans chanting "MVP," Bryant made a free throw with 5:13 left in the second quarter to become the youngest player in NBA history with 23,000 points at 30 years, 171 days old. He joined 20 others in league history who've reached the mark.

Pau Gasol had 22 points and 14 rebounds, and Lamar Odom had 12 points and a season-high 18 boards for the Lakers, just back from a 6-0 trip they concluded with wins against Boston and Cleveland.

Kevin Durant finished with 31 points, his fifth 30-point game in a row, and 10 rebounds in the loss. Russell Westbrook had 17 points and nine rebounds.

NBA BRIEFS

Williams added to All-Star roster

NEW YORK (AP)—Mo Williams is headed to the All-Star Game after all. Twice snubbed, the Cleveland Cavaliers point guard was chosen Tuesday by NBA commissioner David Stern. Williams will replace Toronto Raptors forward Chris Bosh, who will miss the game because of a sprained right knee. Williams wasn't chosen by Eastern Conference head coaches as a reserve, then was passed over by Stern in favor of Boston's Ray Allen when Orlando's Jameer Nelson had to be replaced because of injury. The Cavaliers were upset that they were the only top-five team that didn't get multiple All-Stars. LeBron James called Williams' omission a "total smack in the face." Williams, who is averaging 17.1 points, will be making his first All-Star Game appearance.

Nuggets' Smith to replace Gay in dunk contest

PHOENIX (AP)—Denver Nuggets swingman J.R. Smith will replace Memphis forward Rudy Gay in the slam dunk contest. Gay was forced to pull out Tuesday because of a strained left hip. Smith also competed in the 2005 event. "I have a few things under my sleeve," Smith said Tuesday after the Nuggets won in Miami. "I can't really talk about it. It's top secret, man." Defending champion Dwight Howard of Orlando, 2006 winner Nate Robinson of New York, and Portland rookie Rudy Fernandez round out the field. The dunk contest is the final event of All-Star Saturday night.

All-Star H-O-R-S-E field revealed

NEW YORK (AP)—Rookie of the Year Kevin Durant and O.J. Mayo, a favorite for this season's award, highlight the field for a H-O-R-S-E competition during All-Star Saturday. Atlanta Hawks guard Joe Johnson is the other competitor in TNT's special event, the network announced Tuesday. Johnson will play in the All-Star game, while Durant and Mayo were selected for the rookie challenge. The contest will take place outdoors at the NBA's All-Star Block Party on Saturday in Phoenix before TNT televises the All-Star Saturday night festivities. If a player makes a shot in H-O-R-S-E, the next competitor must make the same shot or receive a letter. A player gets an 'H' for his first miss and is eliminated once he has all five letters of the word. Players will have 24 seconds to execute their shots, and an NBA referee will rule if they're done properly. Dunking won't be allowed.

76ers' Brand has shoulder surgery

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Philadelphia 76ers forward Elton Brand will need six months of recovery on his surgically repaired right shoulder and should be ready for the start of the 2009-10 season. "He's got a 95 percent chance of returning as good as he is or was before," said Brand's surgeon, Dr. Craig Morgan. Morgan repaired the torn labrum in Brand's right shoulder on Monday. Brand, who dislocated his right shoulder against Milwaukee on Dec. 17, needs a sling and can start range-of-motion exercises in about four weeks. Morgan said on Tuesday that Brand could start shooting and dribbling in about three months, and needs an additional three months to return to full strength. Brand averaged 13.8 points and 8.8 rebounds in only 29 games for the Sixers in the first season of a five-year, $80 million contract.

Lady Dolphins near sweep

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Marianas High School is a win away from sweeping the regular season of the girls varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League following the Lady Dolphins 57-48 triumph over Kagman High School yesterday at the MHS Gymnasium.

The 11-point win duplicated MHS' 48-43 victory over the Lady Ayuyus in their first meeting last month and gave the Lady Dolphins their five triumphs in as many games.

MHS will play Mt. Carmel School tomorrow for its last game in the regular season. The Lady Dolphins-Lady Knights tiff was originally set for Feb. 2, but was cancelled due to a seminar for teachers scheduled on the same day.

Like in their first outing, the Lady Dolphins were off to a good start getting a lift from Lalaine Pagarao, Riza Tacliad, and Lena Guzman in the opening quarter.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Lady Dolphins' Rachel Rangamar (15) loses the ball, as she goes up for a shot against the Lady Ayuyus' Dion Diaz during their game in the MISO caging yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The trio combined for nine of MHS' 13 points in the first period putting the Lady Dolphins in the lead, 13-8.

Pagarao and Tacliad added one triple apiece in the second period, while Guzman chipped in four points, as the Lady Dolphins increased their lead to 17 at halftime, 31-14, after limiting Kagman to six markers in the second canto.

MHS led by as much as 20 points, 40-20, in the third period despite being outscored by Kagman, 15-13, in that quarter.

The Lady Ayuyus moved to within nine midway in the fourth quarter, 37-46, behind Yvonne Bennett and Mercedes Mesa's successive baskets.

But five straight points from Pagarao halted Kagman's rally and gave MHS a safe lead, 51-37, going into the last 2:30 of the game.

Pagarao paced the Lady Dolphins with 16 points, while Guzman contributed 11.

Bennett was the lone double-figure scorer for Kagman with 13 points. The Lady Dolphins finished the regular season with a 4-2 record and will be seeded second in the playoffs.

Kagman will face the Lady Knights (1-3) in the playoffs, while the Lady Dolphins will be paired against the winless Lady Rays (0-5).

MHS 57 – Pagarao 16, Guzman 11, Tacliad 9, L. Rangamar 6, R. Rangamar 6, Palero 6, Benavente 4, Javier 2.

KHS 48 –Yvo. Bennett 13, Repeki 8, Aldan 8, Diaz 7, Mesa 6, Hofschneider 2, Yve. Bennett 2.

Scoring by quarters: 13-8, 31-14, 44-29, 57-48.

Ladies Beach Volleyball tourney set at Hyatt

The Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association will be organizing the Ladies Beach Volleyball Tournament at the Hyatt Regency Saipan beginning today.

NMIVA's Kelly Butcher said the event would be a mini league with matches to be conducted every Thursday—Feb. 12, 19, and 26.

Playoff games as well as the championship showdown is set on March 5.

NMIVA said the mini-league's format is 2-on-2 ladies only since the men are playing every Wednesday at the Pacific Islands Club.

Interested participants must sign up with a partner but if they don't have any, they could make arrangement with the organizers, who may then put together teams.

NMIVA said that schedules of the games would depend on the number of teams that would be signing up for the mini league.

Registration fee is $10 for NMIVA members and $15 for nonmembers.

Organizers are available for registration at the Hyatt beachside.

"This is going to be a fun league and hope to see all the beach volleyball fanatics," said Butcher.

NMIVA said there will be cash prizes for first, second, and third placers.

Butcher can be contacted at 287-9954 or e-mail her at fruitymom5@yahoocom. You can also call Kim Peterson at 285-0843 or e-mail her at ttkpeterson@hotmail.com. ***(Nazario Rodriguez Jr.)***

REZNE

From Page 28

still in Guam. But he waited until we returned home before informing me. It's a great honor and blessing to be invited to Japan Open and I thank God for giving me this great chance," the Marianas High School student said.

The Japan Open is indeed a once-in-a-life time opportunity for a young swimmer like the 17-year-old Wong. The tournament, which will be held at the Tokyo Tatsumi International Swimming Center in Tatsumi, Koto-ku, Tokyo on Feb. 21 and 22, will feature medalists and finalists of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2008 FINA World Championships.

Cash prizes await winners and swimmers who will make records in the two-day meet. The top finisher will receive JPY100,000 (about $1,118), JPY50,000 ($559) for second, and JPY30,000 ($335) for third.

The world record prize is a whopping JPY2,000,000 ($22,375). If a swimmer sets world records more than once in the same event, only one world record prize will be awarded.

Despite having to face top caliber swimmers, Wong is not intimidated, as he is focused on racing against himself.

"I am definitely not at the same level as those who will compete in Japan, but I have been through better and worse," Wong said.

" I learn more about swimming in smaller events that are at my level. I cannot learn when faster competitors go out of my sight after 15 seconds of race time. Being nervous is normal, but I have gotten better at ignoring it, and imagining that the crowd isn't there. I have improved in swimming my own race," he added.

The Japan Open will take place in 25-meter pool, which will not be a problem for Wong, who is used to competing in 50-meter pool.

"It will not be very difficult to swim in a 25-meter pool. It just takes faster acceleration, tighter turns, better starts, and faster pacing in every lap," Wong said.

"I am looking forward to have more experience swimming in short course pools. In the NCAA, swimming is done in 25-yard pools, which is very similar to 25-meter pools. I just want to drop my times," he added.

Wong will be leaving for Japan on Feb. 19.

MARIANAS

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Mt. Tapochao, the highest point of the island. More than a few runners had to drop from a run, to a jog, to a walk before making the summit—but none gave up.

The route wove back down the mountain to the finish line at the park, traversing the old growth plantation of Marianas Coffee owner Chuck Jordan, a young plantation and grove of wild coffee trees. The course also followed trails featured in the annual XTERRA Saipan Championship competition.

Topping the men's corps was Handa Yunosuke of Japan (1:06:23), followed by Miyachi Fujiu of Japan (1:22:46), and Yosh Gabaldon of Saipan (1:38:19). The women were led by Kurara Tanaka of Japan (1:42:56), Saipan resident Mieko Carey (1:49:24), and Maria Benito of Guam (1:51:20).

A number of runners and walkers opted for the short six-mile course. The men on the short course were led by Scott Hayden of the U.S. (1:06:23), Chang Wan Jang of Saipan (1:06:26), and Stanley Paracale of the U.S. (1:23:20). Leading the women for the short course were Ericka Frink of the U.S. (1:26:34), Kathleen Herman of the U.S. (1:29:48), and Ryoko Chang of Korea (1:43:14).

Sixteen competitors from Japan and five runners from Guam traveled to Saipan for the event. Winners were honored at an island barbeque lunch at Micro Beach after the race. Each competitor also received a finisher's T-shirt and certificate of participation.

Major sponsors of the event of the annual trail run are Marianas Coffee Company, Marianas Visitors Authority, Pacific Development, Inc., and Northern Marianas Athletics. MVA members such as Pacific Islands Club and IT&E have donated additional contributions in support of the event. ***(PR)***

MEEK

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participants.

Last year's Meek & Mighty top two winners were Willie Garon and Neri Gutzonwiller-Malakut [1,000-meter race], Grace Kimball and Mieko Carey [3,000-meter course], and Cooper Graf (5,000-meter race]. Twenty-six joined last season's races.

For more information about this Saturday's races, contact Lisa Kimball at coach@saipanswimclub.com.

GOLF BRIEFS

RGA Feb. qualifier at Kingfisher

Instead of Marianas Country Club, Refaluwasch Golf Association will hold its February Ace of the Month qualifier this Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Kingfisher Golf Links. RGA tournament director Jess Wabol said check-in time for the weekend golf bash 11am with tee time set an hour later at 12pm. Registration ends at 11:45am and slots will be available for a maximum of 25 players. Wabol also encouraged current and past members to pay RGA's annual membership fee, which will remain at $25 because of the current economic crisis. The February Ace is set for Feb. 28. For more information about RGA's February qualifier and the rest of its tournaments for 2009, contact president Jordan Kosam at 483-4506 or Wabol at 288-1129. ***(PR)***

Fil-Taga February Ace set this Sunday

The Fil-Taga Golfers Association will hold its February Ace of the Month Tournament this Sunday, Feb. 15, at the Marianas Golf and Country Club in Marpi. According to tournament director Mando Guban, show time is set at 11am with tee-off time scheduled 30 minutes later at 11:30am. Established in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights. A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green fees are in the $35 to $40 price range for most tournaments. ***(PR)***

SGA February Ace Sunday at MCC

Saipan Golfers Association will be holding its SGA February Ace this Sunday at the Marianas Country Club in Marpi. Tee time is at 10:14am and participants are asked to be at the venue one hour before tee time. SGA is also reminding members to pay their dues. Membership fee for old members is $40 and $50 for new ones. Winner of this weekend tournament will join January Ace Tony Deleon Guerrero in the 2009 SGA Ace of the Aces Tournament, which is the SGA's club championship set for December. ***(PR)***

CWGA Feb. Ace this Saturday

The CNMI Women's Golf Association's February Ace of the Month Tournament will be held in the day of hearts, Feb. 14, at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort. According to the club's secretary Lorraine Babauta, show time is set at 11:30am and tee time is scheduled an hour later at 12:30pm. Established in March 2007, CWGA is a nonprofit organization founded to promote, encourage, and introduce women to the sport of golf in the CNMI. ***(PR)***

IT&E

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second loss in four games.

First Game

IT&E 91 – Olaitiman 33, Talania 14, Macoto 14, Camacho 12, Factor 7, Cayanan 6, Lansang 5.

RBC 81 – Fitial 29, Danas 13, Agratap 13, Aurelio 11, Deleon Guerrero 5.

Scoring by quarters: 28-19, 47-33, 69-56, 91-81.

Second Game

Docomo 88 – Sanciangco 32, Miranda 20, Rasa 17, Lee 10, Diaz 7, Echavez 2.

Uncle Ben 84 – Cruz 27, Tumaquip 19, Lizama 17, Camacho 13, Sublemente 4, Razon 2.

Scoring by quarters: 13-15, 33-37, 59-68, 88-84.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	42	11	.792	–
Philadelphia	26	24	.520	14 1/2
New Jersey	24	29	.453	18
New York	21	30	.412	20
Toronto	20	34	.370	22 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	39	11	.780	–
Detroit	27	23	.540	12
Milwaukee	25	29	.463	16
Chicago	23	29	.442	17
Indiana	21	32	.396	19 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	38	12	.760	–
Atlanta	30	21	.588	8 1/2
Miami	27	24	.529	11 1/2
Charlotte	20	31	.392	18 1/2
Washington	11	41	.212	28

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	35	15	.700	–
New Orleans	30	19	.612	4 1/2
Dallas	31	20	.608	4 1/2
Houston	31	21	.596	5
Memphis	15	36	.294	20 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	35	17	.673	–
Portland	31	19	.620	3
Utah	29	23	.558	6
Minnesota	17	34	.333	17 1/2
Oklahoma City	13	39	.250	22

Pacific Division

LA Lakers	42	9	.824	–
Phoenix	28	22	.560	13 1/2
Golden State	18	35	.340	25
LA Clippers	12	40	.231	30 1/2
Sacramento	11	42	.208	32

Yesterday's Games

Indiana 96, Cleveland 95
San Antonio 108, New Jersey 93
Denver 99, Miami 82
Atlanta 111, Washington 90
Toronto 110, Minnesota 102
Dallas 118, Sacramento 100
Chicago 107, Detroit 102
Golden State 144, New York 127
LA Lakers 105, Oklahoma City 98

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NMITF First Enticer Race

PHOTOS By
NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

The swimmers start the 400-meter swim.

First-time participant Rachel Rounds makes her turn in the bike portion at Banzai Cliff.

Right, participants of the Northern Mariana Islands Triathlon Federation's First Enticer Race are set for the swim in Paupau Beach.

Far right, birthday celebrant Russ Quinn, right, pads his lead over Ketson "Jack" Kabriel in the bike.

Far left, volunteers Linda Graf, Suzy Kindel and Linda Babauta check the time for an approaching finisher in the bike portion of the race.

Left, Melody Matson lends a helping hand by taking her friend Natalie Hill's bike near the finish line.

Angie Mister and son Logan race against each other as they complete the run.

Ketson "Jack" Kabriel dashes to the finish line to complete the race.

Butch Sublemente finishes second overall.

Lady Dolphins near sweep

Marianas High School is a win away from sweeping the regular season of the girls varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League following the Lady Dolphins 57-48 triumph over Kagman High School yesterday at the MHS Gymnasium.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Tejada charged in connection with steroid scandal

All-Star shortstop Miguel Tejada has been charged with lying to Congress about an ex-teammate's use of steroids.

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Rezne humbled by Japan Open invite

Rezne Wong swims in the 100m breaststroke race during Saturday's SSC Heptathlon Virtual Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Usually, getting a stare from someone is quite disturbing, but for Rezne Wong it was a blessing.

Wong drew the attention of a Japan Swimming Federation official during the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Guam last month earning the CNMI swimmer an invitation to the 50th Japan Swimming Championships.

"I had no idea that I was going to Japan Open until a few days after I got back from Guam. One moment that still sticks to my mind is when I was cooling down in Lane 1 after a race. I was breathing to the left [I usually breath to my right] and I saw a man wearing the Japanese National Team uniform, standing on the pool deck, looking at me. I just kept on swimming, thinking that he was just looking at me for no apparent reason. Little did I know that he was JSF's Kiho Abe, who chaired the organizing committee for JPP," Wong said.

A few days after Wong and four other Tsunami Saipan swimmers returned to Saipan, coach Hiro Kimura informed him of the good news.

"I think he [Kimura] knew that I am going to Japan Open, while we were

See REZNE on Page 26

Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim set for Feb. 14

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

After last weekend's SSC Heptathlon Virtual Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi, action will shift to Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio this Saturday when Swim Swim Club hosts the 4th Annual Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim.

The ocean swim event will not only feature SSC members, but also other swimmers, as the club is opening the Meek & Mighty to the public.

"Though the task is daunting, the stars of the SSC will not be alone, as they are inviting the public to participate," said SSC official Lisa Kimball.

Participants will have a choice of joining one of the three races, namely the 1,000-meter Meek course, 5,000-meter Mighty course, and the 3,000-meter Tweener course.

Registration fee is $5 for SSC kids, $10 for SSC Masters, and $15 for non-SSC members. Registration will start at 7am, while races will begin at 8am.

Participants will be treated to a waffle breakfast after the race and will receive a PIC water park pass for the day.

Meanwhile, SSC is looking for volunteers who will record times and for kayakers who will ensure the safety of

See MEEK on Page 26

IT&E, Docomo thwart foes in Navy Hill caging

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Docomo's Ryan Sanciangco goes for a layup against two Dollar Days defenders during their game in the Navy Hill caging at the JP Centre Basketball Court in Garapan. Docomo lost the game, but recovered quickly with an 88-84 win over Uncle Ben Sunday.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

IT&E and Docomo regained their winning form after outclassing separate opponents in the 2009 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League Sunday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

IT&E dominated Rollers Basketball Club, 91-81, to snap its two-game losing skid.

Mike Olaitiman erupted for 33 points for IT&E, which controlled the game from the opening tip to the final buzzer.

Olaitiman nailed 10 markers in the first quarter, which ended with IT&E ahead by nine, 28-19.

IT&E increased its lead to double digits at halftime, 47-33, as Olaitiman continued to attack RBC's defense and his teammates stepped up, too.

Olaitiman drew double-figure contribution from three teammates with Brendon Talania and Adonis Macoto chipping in 14 markers apiece. Chris Camacho added 13.

Kelvin Fitial paced RBC with 29 points, while Jomar Danas had 13, but made most of his points when the game was already decided. Aaaron Agtarap also finished with 13 markers, but had only three points in the first half when IT&E began pulling away.

In the second game, Docomo, which had its four-game winning streak snapped by Dollar Days last week, recovered from a nine-point third quarter deficit to eke out an 88-84 triumph over Uncle Ben

Trailing at the end of the third period, 59-68, Docomo outgunned Uncle Ben in the payoff period, 29-14, to steal the win.

Gilbert Miranda took charge of Docomo's rally in the fourth burying 12 points, while Ryan Sanciangco, Ponce Rasa, Jerry Diaz, and James Lee made two field goals apiece.

Uncle Ben had only three players scoring in the fourth period with Jericho Cruz tallying eight, Jack Lizama adding four, and Badong Camacho nailing two.

Sanciangco led all scorers with 32 points, while Miranda finished with 20 marker.

Cruz had 27 markers for Uncle Ben, which absorbed its

See IT&E on Page 26

2009 Marianas Coffee Trail Run draws 58 competitors

Fifty-eight runners take off at the break of dawn on Jan. 31, 2009, to climb from Saipan's seashore to summit during the 2nd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

After starting on the sandy shores of Micro Beach, competitors in the 2nd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run Race on Jan. 31, 2009, approach the rocky summit of Saipan's Mt. Tapochao. The annual race showcases some of the most scenic trails and vistas of Saipan.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

While most residents were still asleep, 58 trail runners were up before the crack of dawn last Jan. 31 on Saipan to compete in the 2nd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run.

Competitors began arriving at American Memorial Park Micro Beach at 5:30am to prepare for the 6:30am start, a quiet affair framed by a disarming pink and grey sunrise breaking over the course challenge ahead, the summit of Mt. Tapochao.

The 10-mile run headed through quiet morning traffic in Garapan up the shady roads of Navy Hill to the peak of

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